The Nation

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EDITORIAL

CHARTERING THE F.B.I.

Three years have passed since the Church committee finished its investigations into the abuses committed by our intelligence agencies, but not until last week did the Justice Department complete (almost) its draft of the long-promised charter for the F.B.I. The C.I.A.'s charter appears to be missing in inaction.

The charter, described as one of President Carter's top legislative priorities in the criminal justice field, is said to provide "a comprehensive statement of the F.B.I.'s mission and authority," but at the same time, we are told unhelpfully, under it F.B.I. agents would "be allowed to violate the law in certain circumstances" (*The Washington Star*), that it authorizes "illegal actions in certain circumstances" (*The New York Times*).

Far be it from us to pass judgment on a still invisible charter, but at the outset of the debate we can say, first, that we believe the chartering of the F.B.I. (and eventually the C.I.A.) to be essential. And second, we believe this worthy goal should be accomplished in a way that precludes rather than sanctions intrusions on individual liberty.

That said, we reserve judgment until the draft is released and await with keen interest the views of such monitors of the intelligence community as the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation and the Committee for Public Justice. As we observed last week with respect to SALT II, "The best argument for the treaty remains that without it there would be no way of measuring the pace of the approach to Armageddon and therefore no possible check on that fateful advance." We start with the same sort of presumption in favor of an F.B.I. charter—without it, how do we keep them in check?

THE SECRET SUCCESS OF JIMMY CARTER
Bertram M. Gross

GETTING OUT THE GASOHOL
Fred J. Cook

FAMILY FARMS PLOWED UNDER
James Krohe Jr.

NUCLEAR WATERGATE
Pam Solo & Mike Jendrzejczyk

THE LANGUAGE OF THEATER
E.L. Doctorow

WHAT TOWNLEY CAN'T TELL

CHILE'S GLOBAL HIT MEN

JOHN DINGES

The name in the now outdated United States passport is false, but the faded stamps tell a story. In Rome, there is a special telephone number to contact a terrorist whose nickname is "Topogigio." Other pieces of the puzzle come from hotel, telephone and flight records from a dozen cities.

The evidence surfaced in the course of the investigation of the car-bomb assassination of former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier in Washington. The clues lead far beyond Letelier's death to other murders, other cities and the existence of an assassination underground on three continents sponsored by Chile's military rulers.

Most of the information is now in the hands of the Justice Department, but it remains under wraps. The reason: secret agreements were signed last year with the Chilean Government by United States officials negotiating for the extradition of Michael V. Townley, the key witness in the Letelier murder trial. In these agreements, American officials promised Chile that they would not reveal the byproducts of the Letelier investigation to authorities in other countries when crimes committed by Chilean agents in conjunction with local terrorists were involved.

The new and potentially more explosive areas of investigation are opening up as the Letelier case moves into its final legal stages. At a five-week trial ending in February, a Washington jury convicted two Cuban exiles who were accused of acting as "hit men" under contract with DINA.

(Continued on Page 633)

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LETTERS.

CATCHING THE LIES

Riverside, Ill.

Aryeh Neier's attack on the ruling of the *Herbert* v. *Lando* suit ["Malicious Minds," *The Nation*, May 5] is based upon broad generalities quite apart from the specifics involved. . . . Simply affirming an absolute rule, even with distinguished authorities like Goldberg, Black and Douglas, won't do....

Further, for Herbert to appear on *60 Minutes* to rebut the charges would not be adequate. First, chasing down viewers to correct malicious statements is not easy. Truth rarely catches up with evil lies and the program is now seven years old. Second, Dan Rather, et al., have smooth, authoritative manners. So Herbert would be outclassed. Third, far greater discipline and attentiveness on the part of the viewer is required to rebut charges than is required to listen to scurrilous talk. . . .

Donald K. Johnston

DESTRO/NEIER

Milwaukee

In the hope of bringing the debate between Aryeh Neier and myself over *McRae* v. *Califano* ["Letters," *The Nation*, Dec. 30, 1978, March 24] to a close in a way that makes my position clear, I would like to point out that his characterization of my assertions as a denial of the courts' power to enforce the First Amendment is patently absurd. While I may feel that the courts' decisions in the area of school aid are wrongly decided as a matter of constitutional principle, I have never taken the position that the courts had no power to act as they did. In *McRae*, however, the issue *is* power, and I remain firm in my contention that civil courts are not empowered to define the *political views* of a law's supporters as inherently religious in an attempt to deprive them of a political victory. The Constitution does not give the courts an "oversight" role in the political process and, in my view, judicial assumption of such a role under the "political divisiveness doctrine" would be unconstitutional.

The *McRae* case represents a blatant attempt to justify judicial interference in the political process on behalf of those who have failed to convince either the Congress or the courts that they have a "right" to force others to pay for their abortions, based on the identity and beliefs of their political opponents. In short, the plaintiffs' argument is that the "pro-life" view is not "secular" because only Catholics and a few others accept it, and the resulting disagreement is politically "divisive." It does not serve the needs of an informed public for Mr. Neier to confuse the novel theory of *McRae* with traditional religion clause cases. The case is unique because it focuses on the political process and the identity of the law's support—not on the law itself.

Apparently, Mr. Neier and counsel in *McRae* feel a need to insulate the body politic from any law reflecting a moral basis other than their own. They scream "establishment" whenever they do not agree with the views allegedly established, but conveniently fail to admit that a verdict for the plaintiffs based on the religion theory in *McRae* would, in effect, "establish" that only one view is constitutionally valid: their own. Congress has validly chosen someone else's for the present, and the courts should not turn the First Amendment on its head in an attempt to give Mr. Neier and those who share his views the political victories they have been unable to obtain through the democratic process.

Robert A. Destro, General Counsel
Catholic League for
Religious and Civil Rights

New York City

Mr. Destro notwithstanding, the arguments in *McRae* are *not* unique. As I have noted previously in these pages, to overturn the laws prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools, the courts were required to determine the identity of the law's supporters. The courts found that those laws were rooted in religious doctrine and their enactment violated the First Amendment's prohibition on laws respecting an establishment of religion. I urge a similar inquiry concerning laws holding that an actual human life exists from the moment of conception and a similar finding that they unconstitutionally establish religion. *Aryeh Neier*

HEATED OIL EXCHANGE

Geneva

Fred Cook ["The Great Heating Oil Mystery," *The Nation* Jan. 6-13] compares the progression of the prices of home-heating oil and gasoline in New Jersey and, noting that the price of oil has risen much faster than the price of gasoline, concludes that oil is too expensive. This makes Fred and his pals at the luncheonette very angry. They are sure that they are victims of a price-fixing conspiracy on the part of the privately owned, profit-hungry oil companies. In short, a rip-off....

I am paying $2.50 a gallon for gasoline and $1 for heating oil here in Switzerland, and prices are much higher in other countries such as France and Italy. I can buy my gas and oil from Government-controlled oil companies, such as B.P., Elf, Aral and Supercortemaggiore, but their prices are the same as those quoted by privately owned oil companies.

Another explanation for the uneven progression in the United States of the prices of home-heating oil and gasoline, which is widely held in Europe, is that gasoline is too cheap in the United States. *Kent Gordis*

Interlaken, N.J.

I doubt that anyone sequestered in Switzerland has enough up-to-date knowledge of the American scene to comment intelligently on our oil pricing. Obviously, Mr. Gordis does not have such knowledge. He ignores the fact that the United States, unlike Switzerland and much of Europe, has enormous oil and natural gas resources —and so there is no justification for pegging prices here at the OPEC level which has risen 708 percent since OPEC was organized in 1960.

Furthermore, if Mr. Gordis had not been so enchanted with his own supercilious wit, he would have known from reading the first two paragraphs of my article that I was not simply holding forth with the boys in the luncheonette, but that I had sat through three days of public hearings watching spokesmen for the largest oil companies weasel and squirm and protest that they could not tell what their cost figures were on a single refinery item. More than three months later, despite being threatened with subpoenaes, they still have not disclosed cost figures to justify their prices. Ripped off? You're damned right the American public is being ripped off! *Fred J. Cook*

THE NATION'S PAPER

Due to a temporary shortage in our supply of jet newsprint, this issue of *The Nation* is printed on regular newsprint. With next week's issue we will return to our normal paper.

—The Editors

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EDITORIALS.

Sanctioning Muzorewa-Smith

With its resolution calling upon President Carter to lift sanctions and recognize the Muzorewa-Smith Government of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, the Senate willfully blundered into the heart of Ian Smith's darkness. The new Conservative Government in Great Britain is also committed to a more sympathetic attitude toward Muzorewa-Smith and even though the Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, has put the ball in the American court for the moment, the British apparently would prefer that the United States take the lead in giving Muzorewa-Smith the blessing of the West.

And so as domestic pressures build in both countries, the original and sound Anglo-American policy of working toward a comprehensive settlement in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia falters. Yet the imperatives upon which it was based—primarily a decent respect for the opinions of the black African states—remain as compelling as ever. For as time and domestic politics give credibility to the new Rhodesian Government, South Africa, its most enthusiastic supporter, proceeds smoothly toward realizing its dream of a defensive axis allying Pretoria with cooperative "black-face" Governments in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and Namibia. Two years ago, the Administration inaugurated its African policy by attempting a deal with South Africa. The idea was that in return for heading off United Nations sanctions, we would persuade the South Africans to allow self-rule in Rhodesia and Namibia. Although the game is not over, South Africa thus far has come out of that deal with the strongest hand.

After an election that undeniably mobilized a genuine outpouring of sentiment for peace among black

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Rhodesians, the South African choice, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, came to power. He vows to fight the guerrillas and accept aid from South Africa if the United States won't help him (to do business with the devil, as he put it, an odd locution from a man of the cloth, even the multicolored cloth the Bishop affects). But the whites still retain a constitutional veto and control over all the important ministries. In Namibia, the South Africans have stalled off internationally supervised elections with the participation of the South-West African People's Organization, and promoted the Turnhalle Alliance Government of malleable black politicians. The black African states can only conclude that while Britain and the United States falter, South Africa quietly goes its way winning diplomatic victories. Nor can they ignore the support that is building for South Africa's black-face Governments among Western nations anxious to gain access to these countries' resources.

The Carter Administration must stop this apparent momentum. For a starter, it would be a grievous error for it to follow the Senate's recognition timetable; to do so would commit this country to supporting the Muzorewa-Smith Government (or letting the South Africans do it) while it is embroiled in a guerrilla war that can only intensify. Already the Organization of African States is pressuring guerrilla leaders Joshua Nkomo and Joseph Mugabe to forge a real alliance, and continued Rhodesian Army raids into Mozambique, where there are Soviet advisers, can only encourage President Machel to ask for increased assistance, thus making the war more of an East-West confrontation than it now is.

Still, the Administration's options are not exhausted, and the situation remains fluid. There are moves afoot to pressure the white Rhodesians to relinquish more power to the blacks, which could help ease the way to admitting the Nkomo-Mugabe forces into the Government. The President ultimately may need to buy Senate votes for SALT II with recognition and withdrawal of sanctions, but he must not allow the Senate to force his hand. The Rhodesia-SALT linkage is still too prospective, too tenuous to be made the decisive factor in the President's determination of whether the new Government truly comports with the letter and spirit of the Javits-Case Act. In any event, Carter must not abandon the policy of outreach to the black African Governments of which Ambassador Andrew Young has, through his advocacy, become the symbol.

Ambassador Young is said to be toying with the idea of running for Herman Talmadge's tarnished seat in the Senate. Given the Senate's current efforts to undermine the policy with which he has been identified, Young might be well advised to give it a try. Not only could Senator Young clean up the mess in Atlanta, he could also speak with his own voice in the Senate, rather than continue to be identified with a policy that the Administration is now said to be "reformulating" and which he may no longer be able to support.

JUDGE WATCH 8

Racist Revealed

The good news out of Texas is that State Judg Ted Butler bowed out from his bid for one o Texas's ten new Federal judgeships. We tak some credit for this development since w were the first to focus public attention on Butler' questionable qualifications. As we pointed out ("Bent sen's Choice," *The Nation*, Feb. 3), as San Antoni District Attorney in 1974 Butler trumped up felon charges against the manager of a movie theater show ing *Deep Throat* on the rather creative legal theor that the film projector was a "criminal instrument. In a subsequent suit brought by the manager, th Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit found "harass ment and prosecution in bad faith" in Butler's ac tions. The case, now on appeal to the Supreme Court was cited by Butler as the reason for his withdrawin as a candidate in early May.

At the same time, we must note with chagrin tha we missed the boat on another Texas judge, Davi Belew. It is perhaps a measure of the difficulty of th monitoring enterprise that during the selection an confirmation process no one—not the Justice Depart ment, the American Bar Association, the Senate Ju diciary Committee or any of the other organization following judicial selection—caught on to Belew's in sensitivity toward blacks. It was only after he had al ready been confirmed that Belew inadvertentl tipped his hand.

Asked about his membership in Fort Worth's all white River Crest Country Club in an interview wit a reporter from a local paper, Belew responded tha this was not an issue at his Senate confirmation pro ceedings because the country club's bylaws do not ex clude blacks and "no nigger—no black—ever ap plied." Belew also instructed his secretary to brin out that "questionnaire about niggers" so that h could show the reporter his response to the Senate Ju diciary Committee's form which asks about member ship in such clubs.

The reporter's profile of Belew, which include mention of Belew's racial slurs, ran in the early eve ning edition of *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram* on Ma 3, the day before Belew's swearing-in to the lifetim post. It is indicative of the protective attitude of the Fort Worth establishment toward Belew that the managing editor had Belew's slurs deleted from that day's late edition, which has a wider circulation. A follow-up story appearing the next day was printed under the headline "Belew Says He's Been a Big Help to Blacks."

Had Belew made his offhand remarks about blacks a month earlier, it is unlikely that the Senate would have confirmed him. Now that he is on the bench there is no mechanism for his removal based on his remarks; even the Judicial Tenure Act—proposed legislation to provide for removal of Federal judges in certain circumstances—would probably not apply

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since Belew's comments came before he took office.

The Belew case shows the difficulty in evaluating nominees who are not well known. Belew's public involvement has mainly consisted of a behind-the-scenes role in local Democratic politics. For the past twenty-seven years he was in private practice with Fort Worth's most prestigious law firm. In contrast to judicial nominees with some amount of service either on a lower court or in elective or appointive office, there was little in the public record upon which to make informed judgment about Belew's attitudes on racial or other matters.

The one clue—and the point pushed by the reporter who interviewed Belew—which the Senate Judiciary Committee should have pursued at Belew's perfunctory confirmation hearings was his membership in the all-white club. According to a review by the Washington, D.C.-based Judicial Selection Project, of the twenty-seven nominees who have filled out the Judiciary Committee's new questionnaire, seven acknowledged membership in all-white private clubs. To be realistic, however, it is highly unlikely that Belew would have been as outspoken before the Judiciary Committee as he was with the reporter after his confirmation. In any event, the fact that Belew breezed through the selection process indicates that to insure a thorough review of such nominees, independent local sources must be consulted. The N.A.A.C.P., as well as thirteen of Texas's fourteen black legislators, have called for Belew's resignation. President Carter should join their efforts.

One final note: we should add that Homer Drake, about whom we previously wrote ("Bell's Boy," *The Nation*, Feb. 24), has been bumped from the list of proposed nominees for the new judgeships in Georgia. Drake was involved in an unsuccessful attempt to head off the indictment of Joseph Tonelli for misuse of union funds.

DOROTHY J. SAMUELS and JAMES A. GOODMAN

Dorothy J. Samuels is executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union. James A. Goodman is the Washington, D.C., representative of the Committee for Public Justice, a national civil liberties organization. The monitoring of Federal judge selection is a joint undertaking of the committee and The Nation.

The Senate and The Ayatollah

As criticism of his headlong rush toward an authoritarian theocracy mounts, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has become more virulent in his criticism of others. The bloody-minded language he directed at the United States Senate last week, after it passed a resolution condemning the summary execution of more than 250 Iranians, is a case in point. Calling America a "defeated and wounded snake," Khomeini described the Senate resolution as an act of "clear interference," then proceeded to threaten to put Senator Jacob Javits on "trial" and to request that the United States delay sending its new Iranian Ambassador, career diplomat Walter L. Cutler.

Khomeini's authoritarian drift is arousing increasing opposition inside Iran, so it is not surprising that he should try to divert his people's attention to foreign "imperialists." Unfortunately, the majority of the Senate's past support of Shah Pahlevi and his SAVAK torture bureau undermines the possibility that the resolution will be considered on its merits.

Worse still, the resolution was sponsored by Senator Javits of New York, who is himself perhaps unfairly vulnerable because of his wife's brief service for the Pahlevi Government. If Jack Newfield had not revealed in *The Village Voice* that Marion Javits was being paid lavish "consulting fees" for public relations work on behalf of Iran Air, her ties with the Shah's Government might have continued until the Shah was deposed, even as her husband serves on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Yet, for Khomeini to castigate Senator Javits as a "leading Zionist" was not only inflammatory rhetoric but also illustrative of the way that Khomeini's national chauvinism skirts the borders of a cruder anti-Semitism. The execution recently of a prominent Jewish Iranian businessman for once meeting with Israeli leaders could only serve to fan smoldering sectarian prejudices within Iran. Leaders of Iran's ancient Jewish community understandably sought reassurances from the Ayatollah about their future safety in the country.

The irony of it all is that Khomeini and his Senate critics have more in common than either would like to admit. Khomeini's pronouncements are as yet too baroque for Senators whose knowledge of the world originates in tabloid headlines, but if they would take a moment to understand him, they would discover that they are actually brother anti-Communists under the skin. Indeed, we'd wager that a year from now, if he survives, Khomeini's uncompromising anti-Communist and anti-Soviet views could make him a hero to Senate cold warriors. Khomeini's Islamic brand of national chauvinism has its origin in a far purer—might one say holier?—zeal than the materialistic Shah ever felt.

Finally, the Administration's choice for ambassador of a career officer from within the same State Department that had installed and then supported the detested Shah was poorly calculated to win Iranian confidence. Without passing on Ambassador Cutler's personal merits or convictions, we think a better choice would have been a man or woman from the political arena or scholarly community who had demonstrated a public, longtime commitment to human rights. American policy must continue to encourage the democratic elements within Iran and not equate the present excesses under Khomeini with the revolution itself.

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SECOND THOUGHTS

CAREY McWILLIAMS

For fifteen years Mark Lane has been exposing conspiracies. First the C.I.A.-sponsored conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. Then the F.B.I.'s conspiracy to assassinate Martin Luther King Jr. More recently a conspiracy conceived "somewhere in the very upper echelons of the United States Government" to prevent the Rev. Jim Jones and his followers from seeking refuge in the Soviet Union and the companion charge that the C.I.A., "backed by its lackeys in the news media," has engaged in "the most brutal conspiracy in the history of this nation" to destroy the reputation of "a single dissenting citizen," namely, Mark Lane.

The latest of these conspiracy theories were expounded by Lane in a recent interview in Phoenix with Bella Stumbo of *The Los Angeles Times*. Give Ms. Stumbo high marks for listening patiently, even sympathetically, to Lane throughout most of a day and a night. Even so, she was not able to elicit much evidence to support his claim that the United States Government plotted the murder of Jones and 912 innocent followers in the jungles of Guyana. Nor was she told precisely how the news media have conspired with the C.I.A. to destroy Lane's reputation. In the course of this long interview Ms. Stumbo found that to ask Lane a critical question only invited verbal abuse.

I have no desire to be listed along with the C.I.A., the F.B.I. and the news media as part of a plot to discredit Lane, so let me hasten to say that my immediate interest is not in the merits of these latest conspiracy theories. Rather, my concern is with the current huge vogue Lane is enjoying on the college lecture circuit and what it implies. Although Ms. Stumbo reports that he offered not a shred of evidence to support his theory of the Jonestown holocaust, what he said seemed to exert an almost hypnotic fascination on the large undergraduate audience she heard him address at Northern Arizona University at Flagstaff. Indeed, as she discovered, the current Mark Lane lecture is the best show on the campus circuit. The going fee is $2,500—twice the amount he usually received for dramatic platform exposés of how President Kennedy and Dr. King were assassinated. Often he is booked solidly for weeks at a time. Undergraduate audiences are deeply engrossed by his performance. For the most part he is asked only softball questions from consistently polite and respectful students. For example, when asked where they might get news not influenced by the C.I.A., Lane—with a sad shake of his head—replies: "almost nowhere, I'm afraid." To one student who had exclaimed in distress: "How could they do that—kill 900 and hide it from the public?," his softly voiced reply was: "It's terrible, I know. But just think . . . can you imagine what a propaganda nightmare it would have created for the United States Government, in the midst of Mr. Carter's human rights campaign, if 1,000 Americans, mostly poor blacks, had suddenly turned up in Moscow, asking for the human rights they couldn't find in America?"

Paradoxically, Lane's success appears to be based on his skill in exploiting the opportunity the Government and the news media have created for him. Just how can the media set about proving that someone high in the upper echelons of the United States Government did *not* order the execution of Jones and his followers? The doctrine of "deniability" would discredit denials by the President or the Attorney General; that is, it would be said that they had not been told the truth. The C.I.A. must remain silent. But even if it issued a denial, how could it be verified? Besides, both the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. lack credibility. The young are aware that for years the covert activities of both agencies went unreported and unrebuked. And neither Government nor the press—with one conspicuous exception—sought to protect Jones's followers despite repeated stories and complaints that clearly warranted investigation. This hardly constitutes proof of a conspiracy but the widespread mood of distrust it has created encourages scenario writing and speculation.

And this mood is likely to prevail until both the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. are compelled to function as other agencies; that is, subject to full disclosure and the usual constitutional restraints and not the quasi-restraints that have been imposed. Even if proper restraints were to be invoked, the "conspiracy" business would continue to thrive for as long as people remember the lies they have been told by Government officials which were permitted to circulate uncorrected by the press. And the sources of the current mood of distrust are even more widespread than this statement implies. Deception and double talk have for too long and too often been practiced in both corporate and Government centers of power; witness, for example, the crisis of confidence that has engulfed the nuclear energy program and the question of oil and gas shortages. Corporate officials have admitted knowledge of dangerous toxic wastes long before the public learned of their existence. Scandals of this kind are a dime a dozen; there is literally no end to them.

The problem of massive public distrust is made more acute by the fact that, thanks to modern mass communications, we live in a society in which full, prompt and accurate disclosure of vital information has become the prime condition of sensible debate and political decision making at all levels. As long as this rule is not observed in both private industry and Government, the Mark Lane Show—and similar performances—will continue to play to large campus audiences from Phoenix to Peoria. It has been doing well on the road, now, for the last fifteen years. □

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ARTICLES.

PROFITS WITHOUT HONOR

The Secret Success of Jimmy Carter

BERTRAM M. GROSS

In recent months the President of the United States has been unjustly accused of incompetence in domestic affairs. According to James Fallows, a former White House ghostwriter who tries to tell all in the May issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Carter does not really know *what* he wants to do "in such critical areas as taxes, welfare, energy and the reorganization of the Government." More important, public opinion polls give Carter less than a passing grade at midterm.

As a former ghostwriter for public personages, both elected and appointed, I am appalled by the new ghost-host relationship whereby speech writers now go public in attacking their hosts for lacking the courage of the ghosts' convictions. But I am even more appalled by the failure of the media to inform the public about the President's great achievement in promoting high profits at home and abroad. In the last quarter, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, the officially reported profits after taxes of 552 corporations rose 37 percent from the preceding year.

This is no mean—or accidental—record. If Ronald Reagan or John Connally were President, the chances would be better for straight talk on profits as the central objective of public policy under capitalism. But Carter is unable to take public credit for his Administration's achievement. If he did so, he would have to mention his Administration's elegantly synchronized profit promotion policy, which includes tax deductions for corporations, price supports for agribusiness, cooperation with the energy companies in shaping a well-designed series of energy shortages, decontrol on oil and gas, cost-plus contracts for the defense industry fed by an expanding military budget, Medicare and Medicaid subsidies for the doctor-drug company-hospital complex, higher interest rates, fiscal policies that increase joblessness by slowing down the economy and zapping labor not only by unemployment but by wage-price guidelines that favor profits. Such an admission might well try—or wear out—the patience of Carter's labor, liberal and minority supporters. Indeed, some corporate executives are themselves embarrassed by any publicity about their old-fashioned capitalist gains. If Carter, while lauding healthy profits, should suggest that profits be held to "reasonable levels," he will promptly be accused of backing into Government ceilings on income from property (profits, rents, interest, dividends and capital gains) and genuine rather than fig-leaf taxes on the windfall gifts he has been spreading around. Then again if he says nothing at all, he will appear to have no unifying policy—as critics such as Fallows charge.

For corporate maximizers in today's economy, the less said about profits the better. Establishment economists have devised a language for talking about inflation without ever letting the profit (or discounted cash flow) cat out of the bag. They say that inflation is caused by either "demand pull" or "cost push." But they discuss demand in terms of the growth of the nominal money supply, rather than the real money supply, which is arrived at by correcting for money's declining purchasing power, and of Government deficits, which are relatively small, rather than the enormous increases in the debts of consumers, corporations and Third-World countries. The cost side is presented exclusively in terms of wage rates, labor costs and productivity, without any mention of the rising costs of credit—interest rates have been going up far more rapidly than other prices and certainly contribute to all other costs—or of land, which has never yet been included in an official price index. In a

DRAWINGS BY ED KOREN

Bertram M. Gross, the major draftsman of the original versions of the full-employment bills of 1945 and 1974-75, has just completed a new book on basic trends in modern capitalism entitled Friendly Fascism.

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remarkable demonstration of lexical laxity, the users of this special language exclude from demand the insatiable appetite of corporate accumulators for accelerated cash flows—that is, profits after dividends and taxes and plus depreciation and other reserves. All this means excluding from costs the costs of capital. And they manage to ignore the supply side, except when shortages are created by acts of God or Arabs. In other words, the unifying role of profit seeking and capital accumulating—which animates all these other factors, particularly shortage creation, credit expansion and land speculation—is pushed out of mind and into the closet. If too many people peek inside, they are apt to find out that the new twist in the business cycle popularly known as "stagflation" involves both a profit inflation and a profit recession.

Today's profit inflation—or profit-push inflation, in George Meany's recent language—is not the same as that described in John Maynard Keynes's *A Treatise on Money*. The entire capitalist business cycle ain't what it used to be. Economists used to know that inflation, while good for borrowers, was bad for lenders. Why? Because the lenders would be repaid in depreciated currency. But today, the biggest lenders are doing mighty well despite—and perhaps because of—inflation. How come? Because the spread between the interest they pay and the interest they charge has also been growing.

Indeed, this "real spread" (which, like real interest rates, the real money supply and land prices, are never included in the First World's supposedly sophisticated economic indicators) may be leading, rather than lagging behind, the inflation surge. As a result, according to *The New York Times*, the nation's largest banking organizations have reported sharply higher earnings in the first quarter. For Bank of America, Citicorp, J.P. Morgan, Security Pacific, and Continental Illinois, return on equity is comfortably above 15 percent. The other giants are not far behind. For this the Federal Reserve Board deserves due credit, since its real mission (despite fancy hoopla) has been to promote and protect the profitability of the banking system. If doing this should help push all prices up and thus destabilize the currency, that's too bad. The Fed's managers will then don the red hats of firefighters while adding fuel to the fires of inflation by pushing interest rates up still higher. And if a profitable inflationary bubble should threaten to burst, the Fed will then rush in with welfare handouts to the most seriously stricken banks.

Moreover, today's profit inflation can readily coexist with slowdown, recession and higher unemployment. The first quarter's leap into double-digit inflation and embarrassingly high profits coincided with a dramatic slowdown in the growth of the gross national product and a continuing monthly fall (.3, .4 and .5 percent in January, February and March, respectively) in the Commerce Department's index of leading economic indicators. Business economists and Government officials now look forward to a slow but clear-cut recession to "cool off" the economy. What they are really talking about is curbing labor unions and attaining a more favorable balance between wages and labor unions on the one hand, and profit rates and corporate power on the other.

Neither inflation nor recession is a serious threat to the sophisticated giants of modern capital. During the past quarter-century America's transnational corporations operating in the Third World (particularly Latin America) have learned how to make a pile despite vast unemployment and galloping inflation. With certain adaptations to a domestic market characterized by more political democracy and less police-army intervention, these lessons are now being applied by the corporate-political leaders building the new foundations for the American society of the 1980s. They lead to a corporate state in which the Big Business-Big Government partnership is capable of subverting constitutional democracy behind a pious facade of pledges of allegiance to country, Constitution, budgetary rectitude and sound money. This is not an amusing prospect.

But when confronted with the facts on the secret success of the Carter Administration, many people laugh. They find amusement in the contrast between the Carter rhetoric (or bloviation) of providing service to the people and the performance of serving free lunches to the corporate-based rich. To the extent that this is funny, I find it sad. It is testimony to the success of institutional advertising, the media's mind managing and establishment economics in pushing more accurate perceptions of reality from the consciousness of the American intelligentsia. □

THE WEEK THAT WAS

Getting Gasohol On the Road (II)

FRED J. COOK

Should the United States ever free itself from its bondage to OPEC and Big Oil, should it ever develop the alternative energy sources so essential to stabilizing an economy being wrecked by runaway inflation, history may decide that the first week of May 1979 marked the turning point. It was a week when all of the long-building pressures seemed to coalesce to force the first breaks in dikes that had been so resistant to change.

Fred J. Cook is a journalist and author whose latest work, Storm Before Dawn, *is a Revolutionary War historical novel (Condor Press).*

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Take, in no particular order, this chain of significant developments:

§ James Schlesinger's Department of Energy, so long contemptuous of the possibilities of an alcohol alternative to petroleum to run our cars and heat our homes, did an abrupt about-face and proclaimed its support of programs to derive alcohol from waste products, biomass and coal, projecting production of 300 million gallons by 1983, 500 million by 1985—and billions of gallons by the 1990s.

§ A committee representing public interest groups and South Dakota farmers set up a still on the Washington Mall in the last days of April. The still, designed by Dr. Paul Middaugh of the University of South Dakota, ran for three days; in one hour it produced 15 gallons of alcohol and additional quantities of methane gas which was used to help fuel the distilling process. Several Congressmen and Senators who studied its operation seemed quite impressed.

§ President Carter, starting his 1980 fence-mending, went out to Iowa (where his candidacy got its first boost in 1976), enthusiastically endorsed gasohol (the mixture of 90 percent gasoline and 10 percent alcohol), and announced an $11 million Federal loan program to help set up 100 small gasohol plants in rural areas.

§ Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland, who was being dragged kicking and screaming into this prospective future, announced, nevertheless, that his department was helping to set up two alcohol conversion plants, one in Florida to make alcohol from sugar cane and one in Texas to make alcohol from sweet sorghum.

§ In New York City, the state Urban Development Corporation announced it was underwriting a $100 million facility in the South Bronx to convert 3,000 tons of garbage daily into fuel that could substitute for petroleum. Two other similar plants have been proposed by the Koch administration.

§ By the week's end California, the state most dependent on the automobile, the state supposedly glutted by Alaskan oil, suddenly ran dry as major petroleum companies cut back on deliveries while shipping oil elsewhere. Long lines piled up at gas stations; tempers flared. And back in Washington, the Department of Energy's "hot line" began to burn up with 500 calls a day from motorists who made it clear they were mad as hell at shortages and high prices.

§ And, finally, and perhaps most significant, the week marked the beginning of some illuminating hearings on energy development by the House Subcommittee on Energy, Development and Application. In these, two executives from the Gulf Oil Corporation revealed that Gulf had developed the technology for the commercial production of alcohol, that it could have a plant in operation by 1983, and that the company had nevertheless decided *not* to go ahead with the project. After some acerbic questions and comments from Representative Albert Gore (D., Tenn.), it became clear that the successful production of alcohol threatens Gulf's oil holdings—just one more indication that the pursuit of alternative energy sources cannot be left to the oil companies.

That was truly "the week that was," and it came at a time when President Carter had announced that he was going to decontrol oil prices; when gasoline and heating-oil prices were already going through the roof and first-quarter oil company profits had zoomed between 60 and 300 percent compared to 1978; when the President was asking for standby powers to ration gasoline—and when surveys showed that more than two-thirds of the American people believed that the oil shortage was a hoax contrived by major companies to insure decontrol, higher profits and billions of dollars in windfall gains.

In this same first week of May, Joel R. Jacobson, New Jersey's Commissioner of Energy, was using the industry's own figures to draft for the New Jersey Congressional delegation the most scathing indictment of Administration-Big Oil collaboration that has yet come from an official source.

Citing American Petroleum Institute statistics, Jacobson was led to ask what he called a "cynical" question: "If utilization of refinery capacity is *down*, and crude runs to stills are *down*, and rotary rigs drillings are *down*, and crude production is *down*, but crude stocks are *up*, does this not appear to be an industry-orchestrated scenario to cut production, sit on a stockpile and wait for decontrol and higher prices?"

Jacobson added that during 1976, 1977 and 1978 "normal inventories of gasoline" averaged a thirty-four-day supply—and that, despite production cutbacks, for the week ending April 20, according to the American Petroleum Institute itself, we still had a thirty-two-day supply. Was this a "crisis"?

Common sense says that there *has* to be an alternative to the nation's complete reliance on petroleum, and this common sense began to make its impact in this historic first week of May.

The Midwest farm belt was in revolt. Farmers who had sometimes had to sell wheat and corn at barely break-even prices, who had had to keep millions of acres out of production to stabilize even these prices, were flexing their political muscles. They were demanding that the Government sponsor programs that would convert their surplus crops into alcohol that could be used for energy.

The Washington Mall demonstration was staged to bring their point home to national leaders. It was made possible by a coalition of public interest groups that included Scott Sklar of the National Council for Appropriate Technology, aides to Ralph Nader and South Dakota farmers connected with American Agriculture Inc. The still they erected had two 30-foot-high continuous-fermentation columns and four large tanks that formed a distilling chain until alcohol was finally delivered into the last retaining tank. Dr. Middaugh's demonstration model produced 2.5

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gallons of alcohol from each bushel of corn, and it also produced methane gas and valuable feedstock by-products.

The demonstration's impact was felt on Friday, May 4, when Representative Richard Ottinger (D., N.Y.), chairman of a subcommittee of the House's Science and Technology Committee, opened the first of a series of hearings on energy developments.

Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland testified that making ethanol from grains "was not going to solve the energy crisis." His reasons: the grain production from the 400 million acres under cultivation fluctuates from year to year, depending on rainfall and other weather conditions. Yields in the 1970s varied from 70 bushels an acre to a record 101 bushels last year when conditions were ideal. "We cannot establish that we have a built-in surplus," he said, though he admitted he was happy that we have 1,200 million bushels of grain in reserve to draw on in case of bad yields. He also acknowledged that there are 11 million set-aside acres that farmers are being paid subsidies not to plant.

Bergland added that his department had talked to distillers about building new plants that would be needed for a full-scale alcohol-program and that there were two seemingly insurmountable obstacles: distillers would not invest the millions of dollars required to build the plants because they could not be guaranteed permanent supplies and because wheat and corn prices fluctuate wildly, affecting the possibilities of profit.

Ottinger, who had seen the demonstration on the mall and was apparently familiar with the work of Lance Crombie, the Minnesota farmer who uses a solar still to make alcohol that sells at from 50 to 60 cents a gallon, interrupted Bergland. Suppose the farmers of America utilized such technology to make their farms energy self-sufficient, wouldn't this make a considerable impact?

"One problem I have with the Government," he said, "is that they are always looking for something that will produce huge profits. Yet this farmer is doing it. If you add a little savings here and a little there, it all adds up."

Bergland conceded the point, but he held out only one hope for making a major national impact with alcohol. The nation, he said, has some 400 million acres of forests in which wood is rotting and going to waste. "We think cellulose conversion has a significant potential," he said.

Surprisingly, the long-resistant Department of Energy followed Bergland by weighing in with a hearty endorsement of a full-scale alcohol program. The witness was Alvin L. Alm, assistant scretary in charge of policy and evaluation. "We have concluded that there are a number of advantages and benefits to the country," he said. Alcohol, he declared, can extend our resources and reduce gasoline consumption.

"We have found that alcohol fuels can be produced with a positive gain as long as natural gas and petroleum are not used in the distilling process," he said. "We believe that further economies could be effected in technology."

Gasohol, even as it is, is price-competitive with unleaded premium gasoline and slightly more costly than regular. This alcohol is being produced by conventional methods to sell at between $1.20 and $1.50 a gallon, but Alm said it could be produced at "substantially cheaper prices." He estimated that if the nation used all its resources—grains and other agricultural products, coal and its massive tons of garbage—it might be possible by the 1990s to "extend the petroleum supply of the country by 80 percent, maybe more."

His testimony came as a surprise to Representative Dan Glickman, of Wichita, Kan., who said: "I think you have shown an incredible change of position in the last few weeks. I don't know whether you sincerely believe it or not, but I'm willing to accept it."

Alm assured the Congressman that he was absolutely sincere, and Glickman commented that his attitude seemed diametrically opposed to Bergland's. There seemed to be no coordination, Glickman said, in developing an alcohol fuel program, and he thought the national interest required a united effort by Agriculture, Energy, Treasury and Defense.

Ah, the national interest! That seems to have been largely overlooked in Big Oil's pursuit of bigger bucks, and never did the point become more obvious than in the testimony of two executives of Gulf Oil.

Gulf, it should be said, had exhibited unusual initiative for a petroleum company. For seven years at a research cost approximating $9 million, it had been conducting experiments to develop the very alcohol-conversion technology in which Congressman Ottinger's committee was interested.

The effort had been centered in Kansas City under the direction of Dr. George H. Emert. Dr. Emert had worked with a petrochemical plant, one not designed for fermentation and, therefore, far from maximally efficient. He had tested municipal solid wastes (garbage), agricultural wastes and pulp and paper wastes (these he had found ideal). His petrochemical plant, processing a ton of solid wastes a day, made 40 gallons of alcohol, but Dr. Emert's laboratory experiments indicated that an efficiently designed plant should yield 70 to 90 gallons a day from the same tonnage.

Dr. Emert and his staff of thirty researchers had mapped out for Gulf an ambitious schedule. This called for the construction of a 50-ton-per-day demonstration plant to be brought on stream sometime in 1980 or early 1981. Following that, Dr. Emert's schedule called for the construction of a full-scale commercial plant that would cost $112 million to build and would produce 50 million gallons of alcohol a year.

Enter now the witnesses from Gulf: George E. Huff, vice president for science and technology, and

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William P. Moyles, vice president for administration and development.

Huff testified about Emert's research and said Gulf would be able to bring a commercial plant into operation in 1983. Even allowing for four more years of inflation, Gulf estimated such a plant could sell alcohol for $1.45 a gallon, with a 15 percent profit after taxes.

Here Moyles took over. He said Gulf had made "a commercial decision" not to go ahead. Gulf has committed $2.5 billion to exploration for new natural gas and petroleum sources, Moyles said, and "we're trying to live within our cash flow." Thus, he indicated, the $112 million needed for Dr. Emert's plant on top of the $2.5 billion would be the straw that broke the camel's back. "It was just a question of where we were going to put our money," he said.

Representative Albert Gore jumped in.

"Is Gulf going ahead on its own?," he asked.

"*No, sir!*" Moyles declared emphatically.

Huff interjected that he thought the project feasible, that it can be done, that it should be done—but by someone else to whom Gulf would be willing to sell its technology.

"I find this fascinating," Gore said. "You have done all the research, and you have discovered, apparently to your horror, that it works."

In a continuing exchange with Gulf officials, Gore marveled that one wing of Gulf was enthusiastic about its alcohol project—and another wing wanted to sell it off. "I wonder if it might have occurred to you that the production of alcohol threatens your oil holdings?," he asked.

Moyles replied that it might be ten or fifteen years before the alcohol plant contributed to company earnings—this despite Huff's earlier testimony that such a plant would yield a 15 percent after-tax profit in 1983.

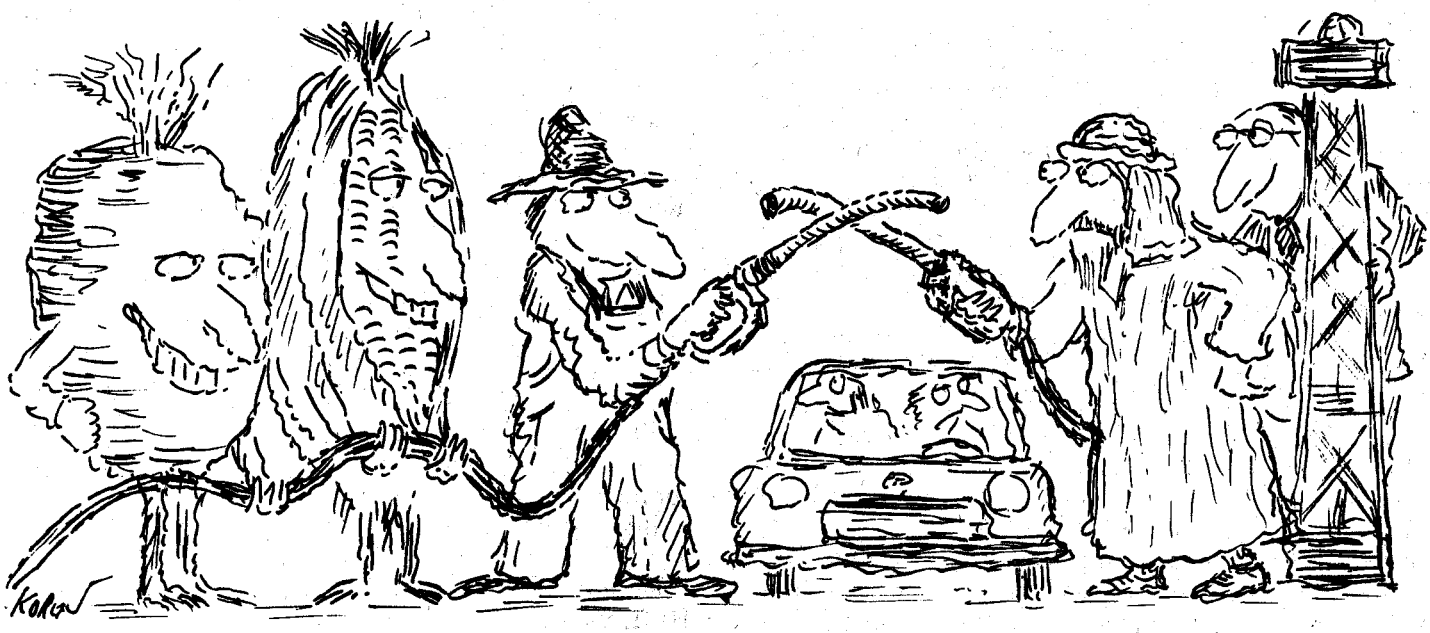
Gore commented that he thought "we're just plain crazy" and that "we're out of our minds" if we rely on the oil companies to develop alternate sources of energy to help solve our petroleum crisis. "This seems to me a classic example of what is wrong," he said.

Huff protested that Gulf *is* interested in developing alternate sources of energy. He said the company has committed $500 million to developing oil from shale and coal (but not $112 million for Dr. Emert's fermentation plant). Gore hopped on this alibi.

"But the big difference is that you can control the reserves without buying the material from farmers," he said. He pointed out that oil companies own 50 percent of the nation's coal reserves, and when Huff protested that the oil companies don't own the shale lands, the Federal Government does, Gore fired back:

"Yes, and the Federal Government owns all the offshore oil lands, too, but it's you and your Six Sisters who are developing them. What about the national interest? I say again I think we're crazy if we leave the nation's fuel future in the hands of the big oil companies."

It was an illuminating exchange—and one Joel Jacobson would have relished. In his nine-page, single-spaced letter to the New Jersey Congressional delegation, he had included an exhaustive analysis of the manner in which major oil companies had invested their windfall profits of recent years, not into a hunt for new oil so much as into the takeover of companies in virtually every facet of our economy. Gulf Oil had not been a major offender in this regard, but Jacobson's list was enlightening as an illustration of the lengths to which Big Oil has gone in pursuit of the bottom line. The oil companies' investments have ranged from the purchase of almond orchards to a London newspaper, from tape casettes to trucking, from plastics and dyes to pesticides, from retail merchandising (Montgomery Ward) to shipbuilding. "Cash flow" seems to have been adequate for almost any enterprise except Dr. Emert's



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$112 million alcohol plant.

Does this mean, then, that Gulf's perfected technology will be shelved and forgotten as has happened so many times in the past when new inventions have threatened established empires? Not necessarily. Dr. Emert remains an optimist. He explains that Gulf put its technology up for sale only a few weeks ago and already it has had more than a dozen queries. Gulf would want, of course, a licensing fee to recompense it for its pioneering work, and it would want a royalty on top of that. Whether its asking price would be so high as to kill off interest remains to be seen.

Dr. Emert himself remains a fully committed man. "We need all the alternative sources we can find, and we need them now," he declares emphatically. "In the next three months, there won't be a person in the country who won't see the light."

There is, of course, no chance of our getting the alternate energy we need now. We did not, like Brazil, start five years ago to develop gasohol and pure alcohol as alternatives to petroleum. So powerful has been the Big Oil lobby that we are only now, years late, beginning to move in the direction that common sense would have dictated to us years ago. But now that the logjam is beginning to break, what are the prospects for the future?

Dr. Emert, whose analysis seems as reliable as one can get, paints this picture: last year, we consumed 128 billion gallons of gasoline; we made only 600 million gallons of alcohol for beverage and other purposes. To make enough alcohol to fulfill gasohol's 10 percent requirement, we would have to turn out some 12 billion gallons of alcohol.

Hopeless? No. In the first place, numerous experiments have shown that gasohol boosts octane on regular unleaded gasolines and yields an average of 5 percent more mileage, thus reducing the gallons needed for the same amount of driving.

As for the supplier, Dr. Emert calculates that we could get from 8 billion to 10 billion gallons from solid wastes alone—from the billions of tons of garbage accumulated by our towns and cities, from the wastes that now create landfill problems and leach into our lakes and streams, causing widespread pollution. But this 8 billion to 10 billion gallons of alcohol we could get from such wastes is only a beginning.

We would still have, especially if we cultivate acres not now in production, excess corn and wheat, giving the farmers of the Middle West the new market for which they are so anxious. We would have other even more easily convertible crops like sugar beets, sugar cane and sweet sorghum. And, finally, we would have the untapped resources of those 400 million acres of woodlands that Secretary Bergland talked about.

Dr. Emert's experiments have demonstrated the importance of this last resource. Pulps from paper mills and paper residues give exceptionally high yields of alcohol because they are so rich in cellulose, he says. He is more skeptical about the long-range benefits to be derived from grain because, like Secretary Bergland, he finds that grain prices fluctuate wildly. Corn may sell some years at less than $2 a bushel—less than it costs the farmer to grow it; in other years it may zoom to almost $5 a bushel, outpricing itself as a source for alcohol.

The solution to this problem, as Dr. Emert sees it, is to design fermentation plants capable of taking full advantage of whatever supplies are available. The additional cost of designing and building such a multiple-resource plant is relatively insignificant, Dr. Emert contends, and such a plant, when constructed, could use garbage or grains or wood products.

Whatever happens to the technology that Dr. Emert has pioneered for Gulf Oil, there are signs that the alternative energy movement has developed a momentum it will be hard to stop. Out in Webster City, Iowa, a farmers and citizens' group has been working furiously since February to build a plant that would handle 25,640 bushels of corn a day and, on the basis of a 300-day run, would yield 20 million gallons of alcohol a year.

The Webster City group has its plant site selected, most of its financing arranged, and a contract being prepared with Chemapac, a Woodbury, N.Y., firm with Swiss antecedents. According to Chemapac, much of its technology derives from that perfected by Swiss and German engineers who enabled Hitler to run his World War II machine on alcohol made from potatoes, wastes and coal.

Chemapac contends that it can get many valuable byproducts besides alcohol from a bushel of corn. Here are the principal products: 2.4 to 2.6 gallons of 199.9-proof alcohol; 1.75 to 1.95 pounds of corn oil; 2.6 to 2.7 pounds of edible human meal or livestock feed with a 50 to 60 percent protein ratio; 14 to 15.6 pounds of carbon dioxide; and between 18,000 and 20,000 B.T.U.s of methane gas that can be used in the fueling process. (Dr. Emert, who agrees that these valuable byproducts can be produced, offers a demurrer about the methane. He argues that, if this amount of methane is to be obtained, the amounts of the other byproducts will be reduced.)

The Webster City enthusiasts are not by any means the only ones stirring the alternative energy movement in the farm belt. Wayne Peterson, one of the South Dakota farmers who worked with the American Agriculture contingent in the Washington Mall demonstration, hits out disgustedly at governmental red tape. If it weren't for all the bureaucratic clearances necessary to get going, he says, his group would have had on stream by the end of the year a plant capable of using 30 percent of South Dakota's wheat crop (20 million bushels out of a production of 60 million to 70 million bushels) to produce alcohol. Despite delays, the South Dakotans expect eventually to set up such a plant.

Such, then, is the impetus behind a grass-roots

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movement that seems determined to get America off lead center and to force it to seek alternative sources of fuel to relieve the nation from its utter dependence on OPEC sheiks and their collaborators in Big Oil. □

BIG AGRIBUSINESS

Plowing Under the Family Farm

JAMES KROHE JR.

The American Agriculture Movement's tractorcade in Washington in February made splendid theater, but as they chugged home only their leaders would deny that their demonstrations had been a lobbying and public relations disaster. Farmers chronically feel themselves misunderstood by the larger world, and those who had stayed home read with special pain the reports of protesters cavorting along the Washington Mall as if the capital were a county fair. The more serious reporting consisted of tortured explanations of the concept of parity—something which, like relativity, a lot of people talk about but few really understand. Most readers, who know about the farm problem only what they read in the supermarket, no doubt mumbled, "How much will it cost?" and turned relievedly to the more comprehensible controversies from Iran.

Ultimately, the issue underlying the protest was not parity, nor, as some papers had it, drag-racing tractorcaders, nor even, as Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland insisted in March, who would pay for the damage done by the protesters to the capital landscape. The issue was the health of the American family farmer. The family farmer is lauded at every pig-judging contest and state fair as the embodiment of Jefferson's agrarian ideals, which may or may not still be true. What is true is that the family farmer's capacity for work, entrepreneurial skills and improvisations in the face of uncertain weather, rising and falling markets and more complex and costly technologies are at the heart of a system of food production that has made it possible for Americans to eat themselves fatter at less cost than any other people.

The question is of some economic importance, then. Some observers, like *The New York Times*, argue that the family farmer is basically hale and hearty. The protesters, who represent no more than 10 percent of farmers anyway, are victims of bad management rather than bad farm policy out of Washington—"plungers," *The Times* called them, who had foolishly bought land they couldn't afford and who went to Washington looking for "handouts" to bail them out. "Farmers did very well in 1978," *The Times* said in February by way of reproof. "Real income, after expenses, rose by 36 percent."

The protesters reply that the family farmer is in deep trouble. He is being squeezed off his land by oil sheiks, corporate middlemen and politicians who pursue "cheap food" policies at the expense of the farmer, knowing that there are vastly more people who buy food in this country than grow it. The 36 percent rise in real income touted by *The Times*, they say, is a composite figure that includes avocado ranchers and chicken farmers as well as grain farmers. Much of the increase was reaped by cattle and hog raisers, while corn and soybeans—along with wheat, the things America grows the most of—went up by only 18 percent and 21 percent respectively; even these increases are impressive only when measured against 1977 prices, which were so disastrously low that some farmers had to borrow money to put 1978's redeeming crops into the ground last spring. And expansion (and its attendant load of debt) is forced on farmers as the only way to increase output in an era of rising costs and stagnant prices.

Part of the problem is that the two sides are not diagnosing the same patient. Since World War II there have evolved two types of family farmers in the United States. Each is commonly mistaken for the other but they are in fact two separate species. The most common type rode their tractors to Washington. Often their farms are too small, too thinly soiled or too dry to forgive a bad year, and in an age in which survival means adaptation through expansion and mechanization many of them remain unadapted. Their track record can be seen in a report released in January by the Department of Agriculture, which revealed that 86 percent of the country's 2.7 million farms sell less than $40,000 worth of farm products annually.

Unable to feed themselves from farming, more and more farmers are taking jobs off the farm. In 1970, for example, the Department of Agriculture reported that nearly two of every three people living on farms made their living entirely from their farms. By 1976 barely one of two did, and in the South the proportion was even smaller. The rest bolstered their meager farm earnings with paychecks earned by holding full-time jobs as factory hands, secretaries, truck drivers, schoolteachers, and working their land in their off hours.

In February, Howard W. Hjort, the Department of Agriculture's chief economist, testified before a House agriculture subcommittee that per-capita after-tax income among farmers was a record $6,050 in 1978. Of that total $3,220, or more than half, was earned off the farm, a share he expected would continue to increase as increases in off-farm earnings

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continue to outpace farm income. Even so, farming continues to hold attractions as a way of life, as evidenced by the substantial proportion of this income that is plowed back into the farm, both literally and figuratively, as payments for new machinery or land. But as a way of making a living, farming is less and less tenable.

Some observers guess that as many as three-fifths of America's farmers work at it part time. They are largely young farmers who, a generation ago, would have gradually added to their holdings until they'd accumulated farms large enough to support them. But fewer young farmers can do that today, when both the amount of land one needs and the prices one must pay for it have gone up dizzyingly. Eventually, many of them give up and seek refuge from farming's harsh winds in safer town jobs.

Since 1950, the farm population has literally evaporated from the fields of the rural Middle West, East and especially the South, dropping from 23 million to only 7.8 million in 1976. There are many factors behind this massive population shift which is still going on and which already exceeds the total number of immigrants from Europe to the United States in the 100 years after 1820. But many of those 15 million refugees from the land were family farmers who wanted to stay in farming but who could no longer make a living at it.

When they sold out, more often than not they sold to the second type of American family farmer. These are the agribusinessmen, managers of the single-crop, mechanized, computerized, capitalized food factories of the postwar era. They run big operations that get bigger every year (in part because they can borrow on older holdings to pay for new acreage), which explains why the average family farm has grown bigger while the total number decreases; in Illinois, for instance, the average farm size has increased 55 percent since 1950, to 242 acres.

Farmers are commonly assumed to be husbanders of tradition. And so they are—in everything but their business. The family farmers who have survived the postwar shift to industrial agriculture have been those who have changed the most. Increasingly, they thrive by mimicking industrial management strategies and methods of production, including its terminology. Nowadays, farming families even assume the legal guise of incorporation to soothe the bite of taxes and ease the transfer by inheritance of the huge accumulations of capital a modern farm represents. To the press and most of the public, the symbol of modern agriculture is the celebrated (and usually overvalued) $50,000 tractor. But a more apt symbol is the computer terminal through which the up-to-date family farmer monitors fuel consumption, figures his income taxes and checks the price of soybeans in Hong Kong. It could almost be said that the successful family farmer is successful precisely to the extent that he doesn't behave like either a family or a farmer.

This species of farmer did indeed do well in 1978. Recent Department of Agriculture studies indicate that they constitute about a quarter of the country's farmers—maybe 700,000 in all—yet they earn around 80 percent of the total amount paid for farm products in an average year. As smaller farms are swallowed up by bigger ones, ownership of the means of production—and thus sales—becomes more and more concentrated. Between 1970 and 1975 the number of farm households selling $100,000 worth or more of farm products doubled, and although these agri-giants represented only 5 percent of all farms, they pocketed 47 percent of all farm receipts.

This consolidation is likely to continue. A 1978 analysis by the Congressional Budget Office warned that if current Federal policies are followed—especially certain tax laws and farm price support programs which tend to favor large farms—the number of farms in the United States will drop another 41 percent, to only 1.6 million, by the year 2000.

Concentration of the means of food production into fewer hands has meant greater efficiency and consequently lower food prices, and if one views farming merely as a way to produce food, concentration clearly has its benefits. But industrialized agriculture has also meant other things—the enervation of small-town economies as the surrounding rural population disappears, the exhaustion of the land under intensive cultivation, the possibilities of disruption in food supplies. "Something has been lost," said Secretary Bergland in a March speech to the National Farmers Union in Kansas City, "something of lasting worth." Bergland urged the start of a national dialogue on the structure of American farming to seek remedies to encroachments by what he called "a handful of giant operators."

But the Congressional Budget Office reassured Congress that the majority of these giant operators "would continue to be family owned and operated." No doubt in another twenty-two years it will be said that these family farmers are doing very well. But it is unlikely that the same will be said for the million or so farmers who, if the C.B.O.'s prediction holds, have taken their families and left their farms between now and then. □

PROGRESSIVE BRIEF

The Nation and *Columbia Journalism Review*, along with twenty-six other publications, the American Booksellers Association and Council for Periodical Distributors Associations, have filed an amici curiae brief in support of *The Progressive* in its current appeal of the preliminary restraining order imposed by Federal District Judge Robert H. Warren. The amici share *The Nation*'s deep concern about the threat that banning *The Progressive* raises to freedom of the press.

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NUCLEAR WATERGATE

Radiation Roulette In Nevada

PAM SOLO
and MIKE JENDRZEJCZYK

"If they'd given us warning, I feel that my husband's death wouldn't have occurred, it wouldn't have happened," said Mrs. Clyle as she described the red, radioactive clouds that drifted over their ranch in southern Utah, and the subsequent death of her husband from acute leukemia. Another resident of Utah in the path of the bomb test fallout testified that ten members of his immediate family had died of cancer or leukemia.

Two weeks after the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear facility near Harrisburg, Pa., Congressional hearings began in Salt Lake City and Las Vegas to examine the impact of more than twenty years of nuclear weapons testing on the residents of Nevada and Utah. The hearings were held under the auspices of the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the Senate Health and Scientific Research Subcommittee. Hundreds of lawsuits are pending against the Government, which is accused of inadequately protecting the people living downwind of the Nevada Test Site and covering up evidence of the adverse effects of the atmospheric blasts in the early 1950s and 1960s.

In 1956, a group of ranchers sued the Government when thousands of their livestock died during and after a series of bomb tests. Evidence introduced in Salt Lake City on April 19 documented their claims that Atomic Energy Commission officials persuaded scientists and veterinarians to rewrite their reports and eliminate any references to radiation as the possible cause of the deaths. Thousands of sheep had blisters and lesions around their mouths; lambs were born dead or deformed. "One poor little thing had funny skin on it, no wool. It was just a big blob and you could see the heart beating in it," one rancher testified.

A former A.E.C. official in charge of studying the effects of the fallout, Dr. Harold Knapp, published evidence of radioactive iodine-131 (the element released during the Harrisburg accident) concentrated in the thyroids of Utah children. He was ridiculed and criticized, accused of making "sweeping assumptions" and doing "amateurish" research. Classified documents released by Senator Edward Kennedy made it clear that the Government followed a consistent policy of suppressing any evidence that might have aroused public concern or opposition to the bomb tests. According to Peter Libassi, current general counsel of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the A.E.C. refused to warn those living downwind of the dangers because it believed "the American people could not be trusted to deal with the uncertainties and make the right decision." A trade-off was made in the name of national security: truth and public health were the first domestic victims of the nuclear weapons program.

In an era of pervasive insecurity, fear and paranoia, claims of national security provided the Government with overarching and irrefutable justification for its actions. President Eisenhower was a partner in the development of this policy. The day after he approved a large and dangerous bomb test, an A.E.C. official quoted him in a secret diary as suggesting that the A.E.C. "leave 'thermonuclear' out of the press releases and speeches. Also [leave out] 'fusion' and 'hydrogen' . . . keep them confused."

Twenty-five years later, national security is still being given as the justification for continuing and expanding the nuclear weapons program. The Department of Energy's 1980 budget for nuclear weapons will be increased by 12 percent to more than $2 billion. New and more sophisticated delivery systems are being built, including the Trident and MX missile, to give the United States the capability to fight and "win" a nuclear war. But this comes at a time when the hazards to public health and safety from the production of nuclear weapons and nuclear power are becoming increasingly evident, when the credibility of the Government and the nuclear industry are at a low ebb and when the victims of the atomic age are making their voices heard.

In Nevada, underground bomb tests continue to expose populations in the Southwest to radioactive poisons. The most serious release—or "venting," in the D.O.E.'s terminology—occurred in 1970, spewing an 8,000-foot cloud into the atmosphere and exposing both workers at the Baneberry test site and civilians living downwind. The widows of two workers involved in the Baneberry accident who died four years after the accident from acute myeloid leukemia filed a $1 million lawsuit, and at the trial this year forty-five Government expert witnesses testified that the deaths were not caused by the exposure. Other victims of cancer and their families filled the courtroom during the three-month trial; a ruling on the case, which could set a precedent for others, may take as long as a year. The women, Louise Nunamaker and Dorothy Roberts, have serious health problems (unrelated to the bomb tests), and have suffered financial loss and severe emotional stress as a result of the

Pam Solo and Mike Jendrzejczyk are co-directors of the Rocky Flats/Nuclear Weapons Facilities Project sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee and the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

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court case. Mrs. Roberts explains her determination: "My husband started it two years before his death. He wanted me to carry it on, so I would do this, no matter what was involved."

In a previously classified document dated April 17, 1974, that was released during the Congressional hearings, Capt. William Gay, the assistant director for tests, stated that "on the basis of past experience at N.T.S. [Nevada Test Site] a rather high incidence prevails for a release of radioactivity like Baneberry.... Ventings have happened and will probably happen again."

Thousands of protesters against potential plutonium contamination from the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver rallied outside the plant on April 28. Rocky Flats manufactures the plutonium "trigger" for every nuclear weapon in the United States arsenal and is scheduled to receive increased funding for weapons production in the 1980 budget. Since 1955, the plant has released plutonium and other radioactive elements into the environment. A preliminary study just completed by Dr. Carl Johnson, director of the Jefferson County Health Department, based on National Cancer Institute data, points to an increase of testicular cancer among men living up to 13 miles downwind of the plant. Throat and liver cancer rates were 60 percent higher than normal; overall cancer rates were 24 percent higher in men and 10 percent higher in women. Dr. Johnson found a total of 501 unexpected cancer deaths downwind of Rocky Flats, apparently caused by "routine emissions" of radioactivity and massive plutonium contamination of the soil from a major fire in 1957. Other preliminary research has detected weapons-grade plutonium in tissues from autopsies collected in the vicinity of the plant. No long-term studies of possible genetic defects are in progress, however.

Dr. Johnson has been subjected to criticism by the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, with attacks on his credibility similar to those directed at Dr. Knapp. Dr. Thomas Mancuso, who compiled data showing higher cancer rates among workers at the Hanford facility in eastern Washington, was also attacked. Hanford has produced plutonium for nuclear weapons since the 1940s, when it supplied the fissionable material for the bomb dropped over Nagasaki. It is a projected site for storage of nuclear wastes, most of it produced by the weapons program. Following the release of his data, the D.O.E., which had commissioned the study, cut off Mancuso's funding.

In short, the policy of cover-up and lack of concern for public health of the 1950s has carried over into the 1970s. Currently, 88 percent of available funding for radiation health research goes to the Department of Energy, the Department of Defense, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Although Congress has authorized H.E.W. to "establish a comprehensive program of radiation research," it is the D.O.E. that will conduct the largest study of low-level radiation hazards in history, covering 250,000 past and present nuclear-shipyard workers.

There is an inherent conflict of interest in the defenders of nuclear power overseeing research into its hazards. Unbiased scientists and health researchers must continue to test the assumption that low-level radiation released during weapons research, testing, production, transport and deployment poses no threat to the public. The passive acceptance of that assumption during the 1950s and 1960s resulted in hundreds and perhaps thousands of deaths, continuing pain and suffering and unknown damage to coming generations.

But the victims of the nuclear age cannot be hidden any longer. They are angry, determined to speak out, and not nearly as submissive as the Government and the nuclear industry would like. Utah's Governor Scott Matheson said at the recent hearings that citizens of his state had "readily accepted, almost without question, that the atomic testing needed to be

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done for national security reasons, and that they would suffer no harmful effects because of the testing. They believed the A.E.C. and its extensive public relations campaign. Today Utahans are not nearly so accepting. . . ."

Both the commercial and military applications of nuclear technology are being challenged as never before. Claims of national security and official reassurances that our health is being protected no longer are allowed to obscure the facts, or deter people from opposing threats to human health and survival. The American people must be able to assess the true costs of nuclear weapons and nuclear power. Albert Einstein said that the facts about nuclear energy should be "taken to the village square and from there the decision made" about its future. In the face of Government cover-ups and industry evasion, many citizens have come to realize that they must be technically informed. The thirty-year-old nuclear Watergate may portend the impeachment of nuclear technology itself. □

Chile

(Continued From Front Cover)

Chile's notorious secret police, to kill Letelier, a leader of Chilean exile resistance to the military Government. On May 14 a Chilean judge denied an American request that Chile extradite Gen. Manuel Contreras, the head of DINA at the time of the murder, and two DINA officers accused of ordering, financing and arranging the assassination.

At the center of the DINA network is the figure of Michael Townley, assassin, contract agent and international liaison for DINA. American-born, he spied and killed for DINA. After his expulsion from Chile, he told American investigators how, under DINA orders, he arranged Letelier's September 21, 1976, assassination with a sophisticated remote-control bomb built by himself and set off by Cuban exiles.

Townley became the chief prosecution witness at the trial of the two Cuban expatriates on charges of murder and conspiracy and at that of a third for covering up the crime. For six days on the stand, Townley matter-of-factly described the gruesome details of the bombing that killed Letelier and an American woman, Ronni Moffitt, who was riding with him.

But there was much more that was not heard at the trial. As a result of the Letelier case investigation, abundant hard evidence has emerged that confirms the long-suspected involvement of Chile's DINA in attacks on other prominent exiled opponents of the military Government. The first such attack was the bombing murder of retired Army Gen. Carlos Prats and his wife in Argentina in September 1974. A year later, former Vice President Bernardo Leighton, a leader of centrist opposition to military rule, and his wife were critically wounded by a gunman's bullets in Rome.

More ominously, the evidence traces the still incomplete but unmistakable outline of a three-continent network of violent anti-Communists receiving support and training from Chile in exchange for their participation in DINA's international terrorist operations. Michael Townley was DINA's liaison to groups in Argentina, the United States, Spain, France, Germany and Italy. Townley has also admitted carrying out DINA missions he refuses to describe in Holland, Belgium, Austria and Luxembourg. Independent of Townley—and so far shielded from scrutiny—other parts of the network are known to involve officially sanctioned police and paramilitary operations in several Latin American countries backed up by sophisticated computers based in Santiago.

On October 4, 1973, Michael Townley became Kenneth W. Enyart, construction worker. Using a forged Florida driver's license and birth certificate in that name, he applied for a United States passport in a Hialeah, Fla., courthouse, listing South America as his destination.

Less than a month before in Chile, the elected socialist Government of President Salvador Allende was overthrown in a right-wing military coup that was one of the bloodiest in Latin American history. Townley, the son of a wealthy Ford Motor Company executive, had spent much of his life since adolescence in Chile, where his father was stationed. While the Allende Government was in power, Townley had joined a rightist group engaged in terrorism against Allende. He was implicated in a homicide and forced to flee the country. Now he was returning.

Soon after his arrival in Chile, Townley was approached by DINA operations director Lieut. Col. Pedro Espinoza, who was later indicted in the Letelier case. Espinoza recognized him as a potential agent: armed with two identities as an American citizen, experienced in commando operations, electronics and explosives, totally devoted to the fanatic anti-Communism of the Chilean dictator, Gen. Augusto Pinochet, Townley was a prime candidate for the newly created secret police.

It was not difficult to convince DINA chief Contreras that Townley would be useful as an American agent to do DINA's dirty work abroad. Townley was hired in mid-1974, joining the other civilian contract agents recruited for DINA operations from the ranks of the neo-fascist Fatherland and Liberty Party, Townley's former comrades in terrorism against Allende. He was assigned to DINA's "External Section."

He acquired yet another identity: on September 6, 1974, Townley was given a Chilean identity card with his official DINA alias, Juan Andrés Wilson Silva, technician. In what was perhaps his first major operation, Townley was ordered to go to Argentina to ar-

John Dinges, a Washington writer, is preparing a book on the assassination of Orlando Letelier to be published by Pantheon, a division of Random House. He was a Washington Post *and* Time *correspondent in Chile from 1972 to 1978.*

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range the assassination of General Prats. As an exiled Allende loyalist and former commander in chief of the Chilean Armed Forces, Prats was considered the most dangerous rival to General Pinochet, who had expelled him shortly after the military takeover.

Townley's steps can be traced through the still readable stamps in the Enyart passport. The stamps show him flying from Santiago's Pudahuel Airport on September 10 to Buenos Aires, where Prats and his wife were living in exile. According to investigative sources, Townley made contact with low-level members of Argentina's rampant terrorist community, a group of civilian mercenaries attached to a branch of the Army Intelligence Service.

The night of September 30, General Prats and his wife, Sofia, were dinner guests at the home of friends. They drove home after midnight. Prats stopped in the driveway of the apartment building where the couple lived and got out to open the garage door. A moment after he returned to the driver's seat, the car door still open, a bomb exploded. Both were killed in a blast so powerful it blew parts of the car nine stories high onto an apartment balcony. Argentine investigators theorized in a still secret report that a clock timing device was used to detonate the bomb, rather than a remote-control device such as that used in the car bomb that killed Letelier two years later in Washington. Townley's Enyart passport shows him arriving in Santiago a few minutes after midnight—just about the time the bomb was going off in Prats's car. As he did in the Letelier assassination, Townley left his local contacts to finish the operation so that he was far away when the bomb went off.

After the Prats mission in late 1974, Townley was sent to Miami. He bought bugging and anti-bugging equipment and plugged himself into Miami's anti-Castro Cuban terrorist underground, which held Chile's Pinochet and DINA in great esteem because of their successful war against the left. Townley let it be known that DINA was seeking a suitable group to help on a special mission.

In February 1975, on a second trip to Miami, contact was made with the leader of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, a small but militant group on the rightist fringe of the exile movement. A meeting was arranged in New Jersey with Guillermo Novo and others of the C.N.M. "Northern Zone." Then Townley returned to Miami to buy the equipment to build the assassination device that was to become his trademark: a Fanon-Courier paging or "beeper" system, which he modified electrically to serve as a remote-control detonator.

Townley, with C.N.M. aid, intended to use the device on a mission for which he invented his own code name: "Open Season." DINA had ordered him to disrupt a meeting of Chilean exile leaders in Mexico City and "eliminate" as many as he could. The assassination list, he later told investigators, was headed by Communist Senator Volodia Teitelboim and Socialist Party General Secretary Carlos Altamirano. Orlando Letelier, recently released from a Chilean concentration camp, was also at the meeting.

C.N.M. member Virgilio Paz, a sometime car salesman in his early 20s, was sent by Novo to help Townley in Mexico. For reasons not yet explained, Townley, his wife, Mariana, and Paz arrived weeks late for the exile meeting and did not carry out the assassination plans. But the relationship between DINA and C.N.M. continued active and mutually fruitful.

Meanwhile, the focus of DINA chief Contreras widened to Europe, where most Chilean exiles lived. Townley was sent to establish or renew contacts with anti-Communist groups there. The Pinochet Government was becoming concerned about a new threat: the Christian Democratic Party, originally acquiescent to the coup against the leftists, was moving into opposition. Pinochet feared the formation of a united Christian Democratic-leftist opposition front that, according to past elections, would represent up to 80 percent of the population. The exiles in Europe included many of the parties' top leaders, and they were pursuing the idea of an alliance.

Townley and Paz went to Rome in September 1975 to cement DINA's relationship with the Youth Front (Fronti della Gioventu), the militant youth arm of the Fascist Italian Social Movement (M.S.I.). Investigators also believe Townley was there to enlist their help in assassinating the exiled elder statesman of the Christian Democratic Party, Bernardo Leighton. The relationship between DINA and M.S.I.'s Youth Front appears to have been virtually a carbon copy of the DINA-Cuban Nationalist Movement link; aboveboard propaganda exchange and ideological support combined with clandestine terrorist operations.

Townley's contact person was a man he knew as Alfredo Di Stefano, who went by the nicknames "Topogigio" and "George." Townley and Paz are believed to have worked out with Di Stefano a three-way mutual aid arrangement involving DINA, C.N.M. and Di Stefano's youth group. The collaboration was to be put to a test, Townley suggested, in the Leighton operation.

Leighton, then 66, was a co-founder of the Chilean Christian Democratic Party and leader of its most liberal wing. He had lived in voluntary exile in Rome since December 1973. He and his party had long-standing close ties with Italy's ruling Christian Democratic Party and other Christian Democratic leaders around Europe. Leighton's assassination was portrayed by DINA as being politically beneficial both to Chile's junta and to the cause of Italian Fascism. Respected by both sides for his political savvy, Leighton was considered by DINA's analysts to be a dangerous "catalyst" who could forge a precedent-setting alliance against the right that could spread to other countries. Di Stefano agreed to carry out the

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three-way operation. The target was a Chilean, the assassins Italian, and—in a twist—the Cuban exile movement would take credit for the operation in order to take the heat off the Italians.

Having secured Di Stefano's involvement, Townley flew to the United States. On October 6, as Bernardo Leighton and his wife stepped out of a taxicab after a shopping trip and walked to their apartment on Rome's Via Aurelia, a few blocks from the Vatican, they were shot down from behind by a lone gunman. Both were critically wounded but survived. Ana Leighton, 57, shot in the spine, remains partially paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair, Leighton recovered fully from a head wound, but withdrew from active politics. The real or imagined threat to Pinochet of a center-leftist coalition was erased; political leadership in the Christian Democratic Party reverted to more conservative anti-Communist figures back in Chile.

Miami's Spanish-language paper, *Diario las Américas*, received a communiqué postmarked October 10, in which a Cuban exile group identified as Zero, one of the pseudonyms for the Cuban Nationalist Movement, claimed credit for shooting Leighton. No details to verify the claim were given, but on November 4, almost a month after the shooting, another Zero communiqué was received by the Associated Press office in Miami. The message said that Leighton was shot in the back of the head, not in the forehead as reported in the press, and that the weapon used was a 9-mm. Beretta pistol. Italian police confirmed that the details were correct and could only have been obtained from someone with firsthand knowledge of the assassination.

The confusing messages, it has now been learned, were part of the "test" of the trilateral pact agreed upon in Rome. Townley's Italian contacts who arranged the shooting attack passed details of the wound and gun to the C.N.M., which gave them belatedly to the press to bolster its claim to have committed the crime. The information was relayed through DINA. Di Stefano, Paz and two other Youth Front members named Luigi and Mauricio were then rewarded with trips in 1976 to Chile, where they worked with DINA in training and propaganda programs.

What was to be the last act of the collaboration between DINA and the Cuban Nationalist Movement took shape in mid-1976, when Chile's rulers planned the assassination of Orlando Letelier. The job was given to Townley, a natural choice for an operation in Washington because of his American citizenship and strong ties to cooperative Cuban Nationalist Movement members living in New Jersey, a few hours drive from Washington.

For the third September in as many years, Townley embarked on a DINA assassination mission. Once more, Contreras ordered him to use the mission to test elements of DINA's overseas network. Paraguayan intelligence, which had recently joined Operation Condor, the counterinsurgency organization created by Contreras to coordinate the secret police operations of the military Governments in South America's Southern Cone, agreed to provide false official passports for DINA's unspecified mission to Washington.

Townley persuaded C.N.M. members Guillermo Novo, Alvin Ross, José Dionisio Suarez, and his loyal companion, Virgilio Paz, to assist him in the assassination. At 9:30 A.M. on September 21, 1976, a bomb exploded in Letelier's car as he rounded Sheridan Circle near the Chilean Embassy, where he had once lived. Receipt records show Townley was in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., at the time, buying electronic equipment at Audio Intelligence Devices, a manufacturer of electronic eavesdropping equipment.

But this time Contreras's reliance on his network backfired. The Paraguayan passports, though never used, provided investigators with pictures of Townley and another DINA agent involved in the operation.

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Security was poor inside the Cuban exile community and within weeks the C.N.M. role in the murder had been established. American investigators began to follow the trail of a "blond Chilean-American" said to be DINA's liaison to the C.N.M. The trail led to Chile in February 1978, when for the first time the picture and description of the suspected agent were matched with Michael Townley.

The United States, bent on solving Letelier's murder, demanded Townley's extradition. Chile, caught in one murder, negotiated to protect the rest of DINA's terror network and prevent the other assassinations from being linked to the Pinochet Government. Two weeks of tense negotiations in Washington and Santiago were interspersed with heavy doses of diplomatic arm-twisting by United States officials. On April 7, a secret agreement was signed in Washington by Chilean Undersecretary of Interior Enrique Montero and United States Attorney Earl Silbert. The hitherto secret agreement, a copy of which was obtained by this reporter nearly a year after its signing, spells out the conditions for Townley's release into American hands. To obtain the expulsion of Townley, the United States promised that "information [obtained through the Letelier investigation] . . . will be conveyed only to the Government of Chile," and that the information would be used by the United States only "to prosecute violations of law in the United States." The pact thus prohibited the United States from passing on to, say, Argentina, Germany or Italy, information uncovered about Chilean terrorist acts within their borders.

Townley was put on a plane in handcuffs on April 8, seated next to two F.B.I. agents and flown to a top-security military base near Washington. Negotiations began anew, this time about the conditions under which Townley would cooperate with the investigation in the United States. On April 17, Townley spent a sunny Monday afternoon on the enclosed lawn of the Quantico Marine Detention Center conferring separately with his defense attorney, Seymour Glanzer, his wife, Mariana, United States Attorneys, F.B.I. agents and two high-ranking Chilean Army intelligence officers. A few hours later, he signed a plea-bargaining agreement with United States Attorney Silbert.

Under the terms of the agreement, Townley would tell what he knew about the Letelier assassination. He and his family would receive protection. He would plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to murder a foreign official and be sentenced to three and one-third years to ten years in prison.

Townley, too, was concerned about protecting DINA's network, and at his insistence, a clause was added providing that he could be required to give information only about crimes involving American citizens or those that were committed on United States territory.

Townley underwent a marathon of hundreds of hours of questioning. His former terrorist associates, not knowing how much he was telling, ran for cover. C.N.M. members Guillermo Novo and Alvin Ross were picked up near Miami, Fla., as they were preparing to flee the United States with false passports. Co-conspirators Paz and José Dionisio Suarez escaped and are still at large.

In late April, Mariana Townley attempted to contact Di Stefano in Rome to assure him that her husband was not betraying DINA's Italian connection. She called a number for emergencies that in the past had been manned twenty-four hours a day by the Youth Front militants. It had been disconnected. In fact, Townley was refusing to answer investigators' questions about other DINA assassinations, in accordance with his agreement, but his reticence could not stem the flow of clues and leads produced by the information he provided on DINA and his travels in connection with the Letelier case.

Throughout the trial in January and February, prosecutors fought off defense attorneys' efforts to force Townley to face cross-examination on other assassination missions for DINA. United States District Judge Barrington Parker held to the guidelines of the United States pact with Chile and declared off-limits all questions probing into other DINA operations and crimes.

Four men out of the nine indicted and charged last year in connection with the Letelier murder are in prison. Two Cubans, Guillermo Novo and Alvin Ross, were given life sentences. Ignacio Novo, Guillermo's brother, was given five years for lying to a grand jury and for misprision of a felony—covering up the crime.

Judge Parker finally, on May 10, sentenced Michael Townley to a maximum of ten years in prison. Though bound by the plea bargain with Townley, Parker expressed his discomfort with the way the case and Townley himself have been handled. With reason, for the United States had been maneuvered into complicity with Chile's efforts to cover up its international terrorist activities. Meanwhile, President Augusto Pinochet continues to insist that his Government had nothing to do with Letelier's death or with any other human rights violations, for that matter. The Chilean Supreme Court is expected to uphold on appeal the ruling denying extradition of Contreras and the two officers on the ground that Townley's testimony was obtained in exchange for a promise and is thus inadmissible.

The case is far from over for Townley. In a letter to his wife a year ago—a copy of which was obtained—Townley told of his fears:

> With what has started in the press, screaming about Argentina, Italy, etc., and what is going to come out at the trial about Mexico, the rest of the world is going to be screaming for you and me for many years to come. It won't make any difference that they also scream for Contreras and the Chilean government, they will be screaming first of all for us. . . .

□

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Language of Theater

ıe following essay will appear in some-hat altered form as the introduction to e Random House edition of E.L. Doc-row's play, Drinks Before Dinner.

.L. DOCTOROW

This play originated not in an idea or a character or a story but in a sense of heightened language, a way of talking. It as not until I had the sound of it in my ır that I thought about saying some-ing. The language preceded the in-ntion. It's possible that the voice the riter discovers may only be the hal-cination of his own force of will; nev-theless, the process of making some-ıing up is best experienced as fortui-ıus, unplanned, exploratory. You write find out what it is you're writing. larcel Duchamp was once asked why e gave up painting. "Too much of it is lling in," he is reported to have said. he worker in any medium had best ive it up if he finds himself only filling ı what has been previously declared nd completed in his mind, a creative *it accompli*. Writers live in language, nd their seriousness of purpose is not ɔmprised nor their convictions threat-ned if they acknowledge that the sub-ɔct of any given work may be a ɔntingency of the song.

Now, this language of the play, this ay of talking, derives from two very dd sources, the prose of Gertrude Stein nd Mao Tse-tung. I read a quotation of Iao's one day from a speech he gave to is officers in the field sometime in the 930s. And the rhetoric of it was star-lingly like Stein. I think now it is prob-ble that anything transliterated from he Chinese sounds like Gertrude Stein, ut I was set off nevertheless. I rea-oned that a style of language common o an American expatriate avant-gard-ste who lived in Paris seventy years go and the political leader of 800 mil-ion people was worth the writer's ttention.

I didn't analyze this language but nerely set out to see if I could do it. It is frankly rhetorical mode that loves epetition, the rhythm of repetition, and at its best finds the unit of sense not in the clause or the sentence but in the discursion. I have since detected a similar sound in the recorded lectures of Zen masters and in sections of the Old Testament. Once you hear it, it is all around. It's a spoken language, a flexible language with possibilities of irony and paradox that are as extended as any modernist could wish, but a simplicity to satisfy the most primitive narrative impulse. I quickly and easily wrote 4,000 or 5,000 words and took the opportunity to deliver them aloud several times in public readings in different parts of the country. I gradually understood I had composed a monologue, that someone was speaking and that he had a lot on his mind. His point of view was so singleminded in fact, and his dissatisfactions so vast, that everything he said could be answered by someone stepping a little bit to one side or the other of where he stood.

I began to respond to his remarks with the remarks of others. They were soon engaged in dialogue, and to keep things clear I had to give them all names. The one who started everything, the malcontent, I gave the name Edgar. But they were all in the same universe, these people; they were defined by how they spoke, in this heightened language that seemed to ebb and flow and rise and break on itself. The leisure for such language seemed to me to go hand in hand with privilege, Chairman Mao notwithstanding. I had a sense of time that had been bought, accomplishment of the kind our society endorses. So I put them into a dinner party (the habitual means by which privileged people wait for the next day), I put drinks in their hands, and I wrote the play.

Now, what this account says about my dramaturgy may seem to betray a serious flaw of composition. If the sound came first, the words second, and the names third, do we not have here a defective understanding of what theater is supposed to do? Apart from the fact that I find among playwrights I admire a tendency of all their characters to speak the same way, I suspect so. Especially if we are talking of the American theater, in which the presentation of the psychologized ego is so central as to be an article of faith. And that is the point. The idea of character as we normally celebrate it on the American stage is what this play seems to question. I must here confess to a disposition for a theater of language, in which the contemplation of this man's fate or that woman's is illuminated by poetry or philosophical paradox or rhetoric or wit. A theater of ideas is what has always interested me, plays in which the holding of ideas or the arguing of ideas is a matter of life or death, and characters take the ideas they hold as seriously as survival. All of this is, dramatically speaking, un-American. What is clearly American is the theater of pathos wherein a story is told about this man or that woman to reveal how sad his or her life is, or how triumphant, or how he or she does not realize fulfillment as a human being, or does realize it, or is trapped in his or her own illusions, or is liberated from them, or fails to learn to communicate love, or learns, or is morally defeated by ethnic or economic circumstances, or is not defeated. Comic or melodramatic, this is the theater of domestic biography, and I contrast it to any other—classical, absurdist, metaphysical, epic—that avoids its bias of sociological realism.

This theatrical mode has been so exhausted by television and film that I'm astounded it is still thought by playwrights to be useful and interesting. Because presumptions of form tend to control presumptions of thought, even what is most basic—the solicitation of emotion from an audience—must be questioned if the emotion is no more, finally, than self-congratulatory. Having written this play and seen it through its first production, I understand Brecht's disavowal of standard theatrical emotion not only as an ideological decision but as a felt abhorrence for what is so cheaply and easily generated. Since the onslaught of television in the late 1940s, the dramatic mode has swept through all the media; everything is dramatized —news events, the weather, hamburgers. The responsiveness of the media, print or electronic, to every new idea or event or terror is so instantaneous that, as many people have pointed out, experience itself has lost its value, which is to say, life as an experience rather than as a postulate for dramatic statement has begun to disappear from our understanding. Every protest, rage, every critique, is absorbed by our dramatizing machinery and then reissued in appropriate form. The writer confronts not only moral hideousness but the globally efficient self-examination in

E.L. Doctorow is the author of Welcome o Hard Times, The Book of Daniel *and* ragtime.

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dramatic terms of that hideousness. Where is wisdom? Everyone has faster hands than the artist. His devices and tricks of the trade have long since been appropriated not only by the media but by the disciplines of social science, whose case studies, personality typing and composite social portraiture are the industrialized forms of storytelling.

What are the presumptions of thought determined by the formal presumptions of this play? As it happens, the corruption of human identity is exactly the preoccupation of the speaker or character (not to be coy) who sets off the action, and whose point of view annoys, frightens and, if I'm right, finally enlightens the others. This is Edgar, whose complaint is with the weak Self that loses its corporeality to the customs and conventions and institutions of modern life. His dissatisfaction is so immense that he pulls a gun and looks for someone to blame.

But not only Edgar but all of the others too who join him in dispute speak in terms of human numbers, in images of replicating humanity, and of themselves not as individuals but as members of larger classes, and for a good deal of the time, but especially at the beginning of the play, their argument is in the first- and third-person plural. And when Edgar pulls the gun it turns out that he is crucially unattached to the act: it is the situation that determines what he is doing, the others define him as much as he defines himself, and his own intentions are something he may learn only as they occur—not before. The images of replicating humans are reflected onstage in this one person divided from his subconscious impulses.

So my characters are formal expressions of the basic passion of the play—an imitative fallacy perhaps, but only if you want from the theater what you're used to. They seem to be uniformly well-to-do and reasonably well educated, but they have no domestic biographies to offer, no childhoods to remember, no religion, no regional identification. Deprived of virtually everything else, they can only have their being from their positions in the dialogue.

Drinks Before Dinner deals in general statements about the most common circumstances of our lives, the numbers of us, the cars we drive, the television we watch, the cities we live in, our contraception and our armaments, and our underlying sense of apocalypse. None of these circumstances are visible onstage except as imagery makes them visible. Instead of a play in which specific biographees suffer experience that we enlarge upon to reflect our own, instead of a progression from the particular person to the thematic implication, we have a play already in the region of the implicatory when the curtain rises. That is why it is so offensive. It is a play turned inside out. It displays human beings not filled in with the colors and textures of their individual peculiarity but delineated from the outlines provided by the things that shape them, their technology, their failing rituals and faltering institutions, their platitudinous ideas and common fears. They are invisible presences, these people, ghosts, shown only as a space in their surroundings. Like Wells's Invisible Man, they can be seen only when wrapped in bandages.

Since the character of Edgar carries the burden of the argument, he is the center of the play's offense. Edgar is insufferable. He insists upon talking about what everyone knows. He is not a criminal psychopath, nor is he a revolutionary—two suggestions the others come up with to explain his behavior. He is not a psychopath, because he is fully connected to the realities of his life and is more interested, I suspect, in dramatizing the issues that obsess him, or in sharing his passion, than in killing or taking revenge. (The culmination of his violence occurs only when Alan, a man of power, seems unwilling to accept the moral responsibilities of his office.) And he is not a radical, because he offers no analysis as to why things are as he finds them. He can feel, he can describe, but he cannot explain. What he is, truly, is a person suffering from acute moral revulsion; he is a moral hysteric who has reached the limits of his endurance.

In fact, he sports some of the more unfortunate characteristics of the ancient prophets. Prophets went about exaggerating everything that was wrong in their society and they warned what would happen if things didn't change. They made dramatic, symbolic gestures to get their ideas across to people who didn't want to hear them: Isaiah went out naked and Jeremiah wore a yoke around his neck. Edgar brandishes a gun, the device of a world perfecting itself for Armageddon, but as with his antecedents, to make people listen whether they would like to or not. Certainly it is an arrogant role to choose for oneself, and for his trouble Edgar suffers the expropriation of his faith in the idea of the end of the world—the theological hope of redemption, of the possibility of something more through suffering and universal purgation. So the joke is on him.

Nevertheless, a community of perception has been formed. Condemned, renounced and alone—dinner about to be served. □

Humanism With a Barbarous Face

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

BARBARISM WITH A HUMAN FACE. *By Bernard-Henri Lévy. Translated From the French by George Holoch. Harper & Row. 224 pp. $10.*

The fruit of a life of action and reflection which its author has yet to live, this book combines confusion, obscurity and pretense. Looking left and right but neither behind to history nor ahead to a future that may be different, Bernard-Henri Lévy marches into a conceptual morass. A minimal sense of intellectual workmanship, or a modicum of critical reflection, might have enabled this talented young man to have found his way onto ground not solid but only soggy. Alas, he thrashes on in a desperate struggle to find an idea which would give the impression of intellectual coherence for at least two consecutive pages. Occasionally, he manages two paragraphs of sense, even of insight—and promptly throws away his gains in a new accession of frenzy.

This disordered work defies summary, and even description of it is not easy. A tract against Communism, socialism and social democracy, it is no conventional exercise in conservative or liberal apologetics. Lévy's hatred of oppression extends to fascism. He dislikes capitalism, too, and seems most offended by its erasure of human qualities so valuable that he is quite unable to specify them. In familiar terms, he attacks the idea of progress as a secular myth. He warns against those who,

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hen the world fails to progress, are ound to torment it into desired histori- al shape. There never was and never an be, he tells us, a dictatorship of the roletariat. The danger is a dictator- ıip of savants, of intellectuals who ould impose ideas upon a recalcitrant umanity. Lévy suggests that the West- rn European left for the moment erves capitalism by disciplining and ıtegrating the supporters of the Com- ıunist, socialist and social democratic arties. None of his ideas are new, of ourse, and the author's astonished re- iscoveries of matters most of us have nown for not less than two generations ınd in some cases, two millenniums) ttest to his exhibitionistic vanity.

Lévy wants to think big, and the eart of the book is a criticism of the dea of the social contract. The diffi- ulty, ignored by Lévy, is that there are ny number of versions of the social ontract (from Augustine to Freud), ach of them different and most of them ontradictory. Lévy seems to admire ousseau, although he intimates that is (Lévy's) idea of social origins is far nore profound. That idea equates the rigin of society to the emergence of a elationship of domination. Humanity, hen, is neither master nor servant but oth. Society, it follows, cannot be udged by a communal state of nature vhich never existed. Indeed, we are not ntitled to suppose that humanity has otentialities blocked or deformed by ıistory until now, potentialities which an unfold under other and more favor- ıble circumstances. That, too, would ntail a utopia beyond history, the ource of a great deal of political rouble.

At this point, Lévy's argument—if it an be termed that—collapses. All so- ieties and particularly modern socie- ies, he holds, tend to brutal despotism, o a relapse into barbarism. Stalinism ınd the fascisms are alike, orgiastic in- ılulgences in exploitation and submis- ion. He refuses, however, the notion of ı sadomasochistic politics. No propen- ity in human nature explains what is, n his view, not a catastrophic accident or a terrible phase of our development ut an enduring condition. Like Ortega / Gasset (one of the few thinkers he does ot cite, which enables him to avoid nisspelling his name, or misinterpret- ng his thought, as he does with many of hose cited), Lévy seems to think that ve have no nature, only a history. That ıistory, however, is synonymous with lomination. All societies are systems of ower, and power tends both to corrupt

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and to expand. Contemporary power is all the more terrible because it has absorbed the religious residue of the past, and sacralizes itself. On what possible basis, then, does Lévy urge us to resist domination and barbarism—root human conditions?

Lévy's answer is piteous. We must refuse to submit. Has he brought French thought back to existentialism, after a tortuous detour through Marxism? The historical defiance of Sartre's great political novels and dramas, the historiography of Rousset, the marvelous human lucidity of Merleau-Ponty appear not to have influenced Lévy at all. He seems unaware of his own legacy. Perhaps his lack of awareness is feigned. Were he to assume the legacy, he would have to renounce his pretensions to originality—and he would have to do political philosophy instead of proclaiming that he has done it. In the end, he presents us with a set of banalities: that government is best which governs least; the precondition for doing good is a drastic lowering of our expectations as to how much good we can do; a politics which seeks to overcome domination and the necessary division of society is likely to become totalitarian. Lévy castigates everyone else for an activism which rests on a spurious theory of progress. His own political morality in the end presupposes a very old (and extremely truncated) sociology, the argument that things being what they are, they are unlikely ever to be much different. Perhaps—but for someone so insistent on looking history in the face, he proclaims a politics of pure arbitrariness, which depends upon averting our gaze from history's supposed lessons.

Lévy's difficulty is not insuperable. It is his lack of education, and time will give him the opportunity to overcome it. From France, we have had an elegant, liberal statement from Raymond Aron and solid conservative argument from Jacques Ellul. Revel's polemics against the left have more spirit, and even a bit more substance. Lévy is ill at ease with ideas more than a decade old, of whatever political provenance. No sense of historical complexity qualifies his terrible simplifications, nor could it do so. His posturing precludes a scrupulous inquiry into an obdurate reality. As for his philosophical method, we are obliged (across all national and conceptual boundaries) to blush for the human mind.

We have heard much, recently, about the "New Philosophers" of whom Lévy is supposed to be one. Actually, they have very different qualities. Jean-Marie Benoist, who contested the parliamentary seat held by Georges Marchais, is a very competent scholar and thinker. André Glucksmann served an authentic Marxist apprenticeship. Lévy is the most slovenly of the lot—and the most celebrated. Martin Peretz, editor of *The New Republic*, who has assiduously propagated Lévy's *oeuvre*, assures us that if the left did not win the recent French parliamentary elections, the credit must fall to the "New Philosophers." What would Peretz say if a French commentator were to declare that George McGovern lost in 1972 because Ms. Midge Decter and Prof. Robert Nozick turned the tide of American opinion? It is difficult to understand Peretz's enthusiasm for Lévy. After publishing his articles and sponsoring his recent visit to Washington, Peretz performed the redundant exercise of reviewing the book himself in his own magazine.

In the epoch of Cuisinart, it is not surprising that those who promoted this book on the French cultural market should also try to penetrate our own. What we confront is a singular example of ideological vending on a multinational scale. Those who have sold this product as evidence for the end of the French left may have to think again. At the recent cantonal elections, the left was in the majority—despite its notorious failings. *The New Republic* can console itself, since it may be able to revert to those attitudes which it seems to prefer when dealing with matters French: sovereign ignorance and ineradicable provincialism. In fact, one requires both to take this work seriously. □

After Strange Gods

DUSTY SKLAR

ALTERNATIVE ALTARS: Unconventional and Eastern Spirituality in America. *By Robert S. Ellwood Jr. University of Chicago Press. 192 pp. $12.95.*

After Koreagate and Jonestown, we want desperately to understand the cult phenomenon. Robert Ellwood, professor of Oriental studies in the school of religion at the University of Southern California, promises to help us. In 1973, he had predicted that contemporary cults were no "mere curiosities or b ways of spirituality," but were "major importance to the phenomen ogy of religion."

In *Alternative Altars* he opposes tl established mainline religions, wi their "committee meetings and pa cake suppers," to the "emergent" re gions, where the seekers, "fledglir swans" among a culture of "ducklings are drawn to a "vast but invisible clou of witnesses" who offer a strange excu sion into self-discovery. This, and tl initiate's own alienation from and lon liness in this world, "help define his e perience" in the cult. In the course his study Ellwood retraces the histo of marginal groups such as the Sha ers, Spiritualists and Theosophists, ar then discusses the influence of Zen America, which began in the 1950s.

Ellwood does not quarrel with tl more respectable faiths. An Episcop lian clergyman as well as a member the Theosophical Society of Americ he simply wants to expand the accept ble boundaries of the canon. He is fasc nated by seances, and calculates tha messages from the Other Side are ofte accurate. And when they are not, an where it is obvious that the spooks ar phony, Ellwood graciously declines th offer of a refund of his donation becaus he considers "the evening well wortl while as entertainment and edifica tion."

He is equally tolerant of the shama who resorts to charlatanism. Like Pla to's Different One who beckoned th cave dwellers to the light, the charla tan, seeing another reality, may "befuc dle the others with deep words an sleight-of-hand." But even when hoaxe by charlatans, fledgling swans, in El wood's view, may "grow according t their own esoteric lights despite, o through, the shadow side of their esc teric world."

He says not a word about the charla tans who only pretend to see anothe reality. But that is because he himsel believes in the alternative world whic cult founders and followers sense. I the presence of a medium, even a ba one, Ellwood feels there "a desperat attempt to wrench from the infinitel dumb but numinous universe aroun us, by whatever forcing and contri vance, a human significance. Howeve the living lie, the dead do not die: tha heavy certitude I have felt thick as sou

Dusty Sklar is the author of Gods an Beasts: The Nazis and the Occul *(Crowell).*

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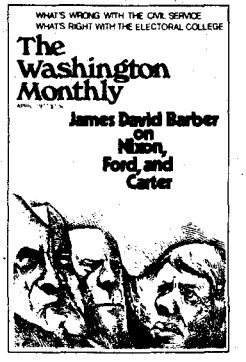
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cream in the air of every Spiritualist meeting I have attended."

Trickster cult leaders, common as fleas these shaky days, receive a kind of legitimization here. Ellwood is not at all alarmed about the sinister aspects of current groups which mask their totalitarian intentions behind an ecstatic religious facade. He does not consider the extensive criticism leveled against leaders of these groups, except to say that American movements with Eastern links are castigated for their failure to give the teaching in authentic form. Such critiques, he feels, are purist and don't fit "the way religion really works." To critics like myself, who have shown the occult derivation of Nazism and have compared it with contemporary cults, Ellwood speaks of "logical and historical fallacies in this position, which, if widely accepted, could have serious consequences for freedom of religion."

Nobody is sacrificed on Ellwood's alternative altars. But today there are many young people being sacrificed in groups which purport to be religious, are protected by freedom of religion, and are thus able to deprive their disciples of the freedom to think. □

Our Media And Ourselves

ANTHONY SMITH

DECIDING WHAT'S NEWS. *By Herbert J. Gans. Pantheon Books. 432 pp. $12.95.*

THE POWERS THAT BE. *By David Halberstam. Alfred A. Knopf. 768 pp. $15.*

Information emanates from nature. The sending of messages about how things are is a process rooted in biology. Society consists of an infinite series of cycles of information and during the last century mankind has devised a number of mechanical methods by which large amounts of knowledge about the affairs of the world are collected and disseminated to individuals who are in need of them. The news media are more than the creators of the appearance of reality; they are the creators of reality itself. The media turn the symbolic activities of the state, the courts, the economy into the social realities in which individuals live. The news media are not exogenous entities, peering down at us like well-bred gods and goddesses; they have become the actual means by which society constructs a symbolic world for itself and this is the world which individuals actually *see* and experience as their own. It is not surprising that the reporter's profession is the subject of increasing disquisition, as the number of its outlets grows.

The essential problem has been expressed in many different ways since the time of Socrates but it is only in the last decade or so that it has caught again the attention of sociologists, historians, psychologists. And now, here are two books which attempt to tell us how important sections of the American information industries have come to function as they do. The authors have chosen to do so in very different ways, since one is a best-selling journalist who starts—and finishes—with people, while the other is an academic sociologist who concentrates on generalizations and theories. They set out, however, under the same starter's orders.

Both books conscientiously attempt to lift the same veil—one which separates the powers that be (the Chandlers, the Sulzbergers, the Paleys, the Grahams, the Stantons) from their client audiences and, indeed, from most of the reporters and editors employed. Behind David Halberstam's veil there is the plush devil's kitchen of shrill, scheming plutocrats in their elegant homes and offices, overweeningly ambitious (apparently for ambition's own sake), finagling, White House-bedazzled autocrats, the brash media patricians of New York and Los Angeles, who make and unmake national leaders. Here we find them stripped down to their diamonds, so totally revealed in their humanity that they all merge in the reader's mind into a superior soap opera, a kind of *Upstairs, Upstairs*. Only when we read Halberstam's acknowledgments at the end of the book do we learn that we are supposed to have read "a book on the rise of modern media and the effect on the way we perceive events." Not in my copy, however, which contained 800 pages of wonderful high-dynastic gossip, unsanctified by any scrap of theory. One longs to know what the writer *learned* in the five years he spent accumulating this treasury of anecdotag (much of which has not been publishe previously).

Only through a process of conscie tious inference does one begin to see faint pattern of generalized theory: th powerful entrepreneurs of the institu tions studied are gradually brought heel, so to speak, by the prevailing o thodoxy. Both *Time* and *The Los An geles Times*, for example, found it im possible to maintain their support fo Chiang Kai-shek in China and for Rich ard Nixon in California in anythin more than name in the 1960s; they ha a choice to fade away and maintain th ideological animus of their founders i all its purity or to go forward as medi conglomerates on the basis of liberal a ticles of faith. With faint twinges conscience, they slaughtered their rea tionary darlings in their second an third generations.

We find that behind Prof. Herbe Gans's veil there is a hard-workin world of virtuous value-free journalist all the glitzy people in the other boo have flown away like goblins at daw Here we see busy reporters, nose down, pursuing a craft which place them halfway between employees corporate bureaucracies and member of a profession, "summarizing, refin ing, altering" their material to rende it suitable fodder for their patient au diences. Gans concentrates on *CB News*, *NBC News*, and *Time* an *Newsweek* magazines and his work ha its place as a summarizing of the exist ing state of knowledge in a field whic analyzes news selection as the result c a series of built-in constraints.

Anthony Smith, formerly a BBC television producer, writes on media affairs and has just completed a book, The Newspaper *(Thames & Hudson).*

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His method is to present the results of his analysis of the actual content of the news media he has chosen and to sketch the picture of American society and values which that content reveals. He is a sociologist who operates as a participant-observer and who lays out the conceptual tools of his trade but somehow fails to use them to best effect. He has spent many weeks watching his various groups of journalists in the late 1960s and again in the early 1970s but fails to identify the whole mechanism of which they are a part. He concentrates, as is his right, not upon the institutions, nor upon the constraining technologies but upon the inherited frameworks within which the images of reality are snatched. He identifies all the considerations that go into news judgments, but somehow the glue is missing and the elements do not stick. He examines the biases in selection which go to make up news priorities: ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism, moderatism, social order and national leadership, and proclaims that these values add up to the largely discarded political doctrine of Progressivism, a kind of upper-crust social democracy now beginning to evaporate except among—he says—the journalistic profession. Gans does not see the constraints *behind* the constraints; thus he offers us in his last section a prescriptive formula for better news, without explaining how this "multiperspectival news" can be brought into existence in the context of the media industries which currently exist (for very good and inexorable reasons).

Gans would have news be more national, with a "bottom-up" view added to the "top-down" approach; he wants more output news (i.e., how national policy works in practice) and better information about how more sectors of the public think; he would place more emphasis on how issues affect people. But how to hang the bell on this particular cat? He says there should be a national endowment for better news with money to make it better. It is as if Professor Gans has not seen the cogency of his own analysis: If a few million dollars will buy perfection, why bother with this kind of analysis, which, if it means anything, means that the constraints emanate from the elemental skewedness in society as a whole?

Halberstam knows his journalism and his journalists (and their employers) so well that he does not presume to hint that they may be made better. His position is that of a man who sees so deeply into the anguish, the pride or the shabbiness of his subjects that he does not for a moment inveigh against them or imply that things are other than they could be. Yet exposé is the genre in which he works. A lamb that bites the hand that feeds him, in this instance. What he chronicles is the emergence of four audacious enterprises (*The Washington Post, Time, CBS News* and *The Los Angeles Times*) from their era of editorial caprice to the age of multimedia conglomerates, the epoch of the bottom line, playing as they do so the nerve-racking game of genetic roulette, hoping against hope that the next scion of the family will be able to shoulder the increased burden which his (or her) predecessor has bequeathed. For beyond the era of the family conglomerate lies only that of the professional manager, the pure corporation ruled with all the hindsight of the accountant. One of the best symbolic moments in the book is the sight of Katharine Graham being forced to "hype" her paper before an audience of Wall Street analysts for whom anything below 15 percent profit on revenue is failure. Her stock rose 3 points overnight: what *The Post* has achieved under Mrs. Graham is Watergate plus 15 percent profit.

The book has to be honored for its moments—which are numerous—rather than for its overall insight. It tells us what no other journalistic, or sociological, treatment of the subject comes near to, about the *relationships* within the media world. Halberstam deploys a stunning novelistic skill in showing how his scores of characters feel about one another. There are mothers and sons (Buff Chandler and Otis, Katharine Graham and Donald); there are terrifying liaisons of fathers-in-law and sons-in-law (Eugene Meyer and Philip Graham); wives versus mistresses (Philip Graham's Katharine Graham and Robin Webb); founders and their heirs; Presidents and their journalistic confidants; successful Jews and the establishment they hungered for; editors and their underlings, people and their jobs. One does not wait to wonder whether Halberstam has given us the whole truth; he has given us convincing and satisfying truths, as a storyteller should. Every page carries a graphic revelation of some piece of subtle delineation, flashes of insight struck off by the adjacencies of power. So understanding is the reporting that the skeletons, once hauled from their closets, don't rattle much. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

The Cuban director, Tomás Gutierrez Alea, is known here for *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968) and *The Last Supper* (1977), two utterly different but similarly memorable films. An earlier picture, *Death of a Bureaucrat*, was made and shown in Cuba in 1966, but has only now been released in the United States. The wonder is that it was shown in Cuba,—dictatorships do not take kindly to ridicule and *Death of a Bureaucrat* is gleefully savage.

Gutierrez Alea dedicates it to a long string of early screen comedians, and well he should, for he has borrowed frankly and to excellent purpose from Harold Lloyd, Stan Laurel, Chaplin, Keaton, Mack Sennett, René Clair and countless others in the pantheon. His subject is frustration, a classic theme of slapstick. Francisco Perez, a simple man of inventive bent, has constructed a machine of marvelous complexity that turns out plaster busts of José Martí, the Cuban national hero, as fast as you can say "doughnut." Alas, one day as he is clambering about on the structure, he falls into the works and himself becomes a monument.

Francisco had been an exemplary union man and his comrades, as a sentimental gesture, bury him with his union card on his bosom. But to get her pension, his widow must produce that card. Her nephew (Salvador Wood), a young man of solemn mien and great determination, undertakes to solve the dilemma, and I believe you can foresee at once the shape, if not the details, of

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his adventures in officialdom. Step one is straightforward, though spooky: since the law imposes a six-month cooling-off period before a body may be exhumed, the nephew arranges, with the help of two off-duty gravediggers, for a midnight rendezvous with his uncle. However, surprised in that bold exploit, he flees in panic, not only with the card but with the body itself.

It then becomes a matter of persuading the cemetery to receive for burial an already buried corpse, and that is the sort of proposal that bureaucracy cannot understand, let alone accept. The weather is hot, the supply of ice is limited, the carrion birds gather in the sky and it must be said that the nephew, unsettled by pursuit of ever-receding rubber stamps down endless corridors of identical desks, flies into an entirely unproletarian rage which the director of the cemetery does not survive. That dignitary receives a state funeral, during which socialist propriety dissipates in a tempest of Latin fury and the film ends in an eruption of custard pies.

Keystone comedy gags proliferate, as for example: an innocent bystander is knocked unconscious, slowly regains his wits, is immediately felled again, shakes himself awake, is once more clobbered—etc., etc., and all without malice. That celebrated routine is, of course, emblematic of the little man caught in the system. *Death of a Bureaucrat* is subversive, as were the early American comedies—though at the time few viewers realized why they laughed so hard. Gutierrez Alea catches the old style admirably, but he doesn't quite match the pace. Since repetition is the soul of slapstick, you must keep the tempo snappy, and *Death of a Bureaucrat* loses the beat in places. All in all, though, it is a brilliant spoof of the red-tape sequel to heroic revolution. And yet Castro not only let people see it but launched a "struggle against bureaucracy." Gutierrez Alea has modestly declined to take credit for that.

As a small contribution to the battle against inflation, I can report that two crook pictures, which you might feel impelled to see because of their casts and general acclaim, are not essential items in a carefully designed budget.

The first of these is *Teresa the Thief*, starring Monica Vitti, who is also to be found these days horsing around with Keith Carradine in *An Almost Perfect Affair*. Directed by Carlo di Palma from a novel by Dacia Maraini, *Teresa the Thief* is a comedy with sociological undertones; thus it is modeled, at some remove, on the neo-realism of postwar Italian cinema. Teresa, one of a litter of children produced by a ham-fisted peasant and his exhausted, patiently enduring wife, takes off in her teens for the freedom of big-city life. Beautiful, exuberant and ignorant, she falls in with a group of fellow incompetents and undertakes to live by her wits, of which she has few. Her worst failings are an inability to learn from her mistakes (she is forever declaring, in retrospective appraisal, that some obviously harebrained episode was "the happiest time of my life") and an enthusiasm for men whose imperfections of character are ludicrously apparent. As a result of this general heedlessness, she lands in prison and madhouse—perfunctorily brutal places of rather handsome architecture—and ages rapidly into a scraggly gray wig. At the end, as at the beginning, she is seen romping in careless glee through fields of waist-high wildflowers—a tribute, I assume, to the indomitability of the human spirit. The film is a comedy only because Teresa is so superficial a character; if she had any substance, her history would be tragic enough. None of the above is to be taken as a reflection on Monica Vitti. She is a good actress caught in a thin part.

The other film is *The Silent Partner*, starring Elliott Gould, Christopher Plummer and Susannah York. It is a heist thriller set in Toronto, in which a bank teller (Gould), having spotted a holdup man (Plummer) lurking about the premises, decides to divert to himself the proceeds of the impending larceny. What he doesn't know is that the thief is one of those unfortunate psychopathic chaps who would be more successful at their trade if they didn't take such pleasure in torturing their victims. But Miles, the bank clerk, has the advantage of looking harmless while concealing an ability to outwit the occasion that would earn a salute from James Bond. At the end he departs in an ambulance (superficial shoulder wound) with the booty and Miss York, whose task in the film has been to look puzzled but available. Plummer's task has been to look sinister and die grotesquely.

All this is directed with much polish by Daryl Duke, from a novel by Anders Bodelson. The film takes some pains to be viewed seriously: pointing out that bank robbery is not, perhaps, the worst form of antisocial behavior, it weaves a subplot of pecking-order lechery. But in essence it is a thriller and its wea ness on that score is that it buil more implausibility* than it does te sion. I couldn't for a moment belie that the teller's caper would work, a about the time a woman's severed he was discovered in a tank of tropical fi I began to laugh. On such occasio Hitchcock had a nasty way of laughi right back at you, but Duke shot l bolt with that gruesome examp of Plummer the prowler's horr habits.

*After writing this, I came upon a *New Yo Times* story about Arnold Barry Moskowi who, having been convicted of steali $229,000 from a Brooklyn bank, was set fr on probation by Judge Ellsworth A. V Graafeiland, on the ground that the robbe was "completely out of character," and th to send young Moskowitz to jail for a lo term "would ruin a life that has so mu potential." Moskowitz does indeed ha potential: the last line of the *Times* sto reads, "The missing money has never be recovered."

However that's life—fiction must be cre ible.

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

Roy Lichtenstein is an arti whose use of quotation and a lusion is as habitual as that Horace or Alexander Pop His references depend of course not the classical past but on the differe levels of contemporary experience. Th allusions in his new paintings at L Castelli are to the School of Paris, whi his early pictures refer us to humb bits of anonymous Americana. Th sources of those early paintings i cluded details from a diner menu, mail-order catalogue and the Yello Pages. Now his sources include Lég and Picasso at their most stately an not in this show but in preceding pi tures, Matisse. In the early 196 Americana was, to use Lichtenstein word, "discredited," and now perha European masters are in a similar pos tion, discredited for being a luxury popular culture once was for its con monness.

Probably there are other factors work in these references. Lichtenstein work was shown in Paris in 1963, on one year after his first Pop show in Ne York at Castelli. In 1967 he had a retr

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spective in Amsterdam which then toured London and Bern. He may well have pleasant memories of Europe. In addition, the quotations may symbolize his entrance into rich company: his paintings are now very expensive. The juxtaposition of his own work with classic European art, his "Golf *Ball*" with Matisse's "Gold Fish *Bowl*" in one of Lichtenstein's earlier "Artist's Studio" series, for example, obliquely reflects the art market. Is this another victory by an artist of the New World over the Old, or a declaration of allegiance to the grand tradition? Léger was always an object of Lichtenstein's admiration and his open presence in the new pictures supports the cultural and stylistic reading.

The play with quotations, translated of course into Lichtenstein's unmistakable outlines and solid patches of color, is ironic, complex and reserved. In "Stepping Out" there are two figures, the male a direct quote from Léger and the woman a surrealistic invention of Lichtenstein's own. She is drawn as if he were illustrating a hostile verbal description of modern art: one eye at right angles to ripe lips (the lips derived from his own "sophisticated girls" of 1965), a solid hank of blonde hair and a mirror. The mirror as a head is used in his wry "Self Portrait" which consists of an empty T-shirt with a mirror above it. In "Cosmology," 10 feet high and 14 feet long, two figures with archaic profiles look in from the sides like bookends holding up a lively display of orbs, quadrants and clouds. It is clearly reminiscent of Léger in clarity of edge and bite of color, but the slotting together of the shapely fragments seems to come ultimately from Picasso's large ornamental still lifes, such as the "Still Life with Mandolin," 1924, in the Guggenheim Museum. The effect of these pictures is one of gregarious iconography in which time-binding forms celebrate their simultaneity. In place of the acts of exclusion and reduction, often made ignorantly by American artists, Lichtenstein practices a mode of traditional complexity.

The parts have a collagelike separateness from one another, but cohere because of Lichtenstein's highly experienced sense of color and placing. Each area of color, viewed singly, is treated systematically, applied in smooth flat areas, regular oblique hatching, or invariant screens of dots. The total effect of the pictures, however, is of a unified skin of color, owing to Lichtenstein's echoes and balances of hue. A key step toward his present supple use of stylized elements can be found in a small group of still lifes from 1976, in which he used systematic hatching to indicate effects of light and shade. Aside from the primary colors he has always used, and which are still dominant, there are pink, off-black, and pale blue tints that he has not used before. Thus, a lyrical flow of color unifies the tough, self-contained forms set down with a clear hard line.

The paintings that made Lichtenstein famous are mostly single images. One thing at a time: a head from the Yellow Pages, a sunset, a brushstroke, a Greek temple. His later work, since roughly 1972, on the other hand, tends to be intricate and copious, with hierarchies of inflected form. He had painted his most austere work prior to this: the mirrors—head-on views of nearly monochrome tonal gradients, like the comic-strip formula for glass—and entablatures, black-and-white simulations of peacefully repetitive sections of classical architecture. He turned to still life, fairly simple at first but with pungent color, and moved from there to collections of objects of mounting complexity. In the one-image paintings, the question of space was in suspense, but as the number of objects increased, a scenic space, which could carry their interrelations, inevitably developed. From the elaborate still lifes, Lichtenstein moved to the new paintings, in which the imagery equivocates between figure painting and quotation. It is a brilliant elaboration of the problems of signification that have always been present in his art.

A note on timing: the Lichtenstein exhibition will be over by the time my review appears. It is sometimes supposed that the chief function of art criticism is to direct readers to shows, but there are advertisements and gallery listings for that. Artists continually, and dealers sometimes, complain about tardy reviews. However, Lichtenstein's work, to stay with the present case, will be seen in other exhibitions and certainly will be reproduced. What a review can do is contribute to the general level of information about an artist. It is an unacknowledged fact of art criticism that comparatively few readers see the exhibitions they read about even when the review is prompt (compare estimates of journal readerships with gallery attendance figures). To make punctual appearance the sole criterion of relevance for art criticism is to treat it merely as artists' publicity and not as *discussion* about art. □

INDIGENOUS MUSIC

NAT HENTOFF

In my early teens, I worked at whatever jobs I could find—on a fruit wagon, in a haberdashery and a candy store—to deal with my addiction. Practically all the money went into jazz recordings, among them a wondrous new label in New York, Commodore, which came out of a legendary record store of the same name where, I read, there were sometimes more musicians than customers. The releases were on 12-inch, 78 r.p.m. records, cost $1.50, but were actually beyond price, since the immense pleasure they gave could be repeated again and again.

Commodore, both the shop and the label, closed down a long time ago, but Milt Gabler, the enthusiast who created it all, is still very much alive and has begun making his treasures available again. There will soon be a series on Columbia, and Book-of-the-Month Records has already released a boxed, three-LP set of Commodore jazz from 1938 to 1950.

Most of the music is what has loosely been called Dixieland—a walloping ensemble framing a series of improvised solos in a repertory consisting of such classic flag-wavers as "That's a Plenty," "Jazz Me Blues," "Muskrat Ramble" and "Riverboat Shuffle," and some gustily transformed popular standards. Though some black players are involved, the style is largely white jazz with roots in Chicago and, to a lesser extent, New Orleans.

While much Dixieland did become overly formulaic and rhythmically stiff from the 1940s on, the Commodore dates featured the genre's more unyielding individualists so that the solo quality was usually quite struttingly high. The collective improvising, furthermore, was also more freewheeling and feisty than the routinized Dixieland then in vogue among college audiences and beery young professionals.

Indeed, not having heard most of these Commodore performances for a long time, I was delighted at how sturdily and boisterously they hold up. The élan was not just endemic to my own youth when I first listened. The music is still crisp, fiery and often exultant. Among the more commanding horns is

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the trumpet of Wild Bill Davison, whose ferocious power excels even that of another familiar on these dates, Muggsy Spanier. One of the most electric experiences in all of jazz is hearing Davison hurl the front line into climax after climax in one of these Dixieland anthems.

The most stubbornly, ceaselessly creative improviser is clarinetist Pee Wee Russell whose pungent and oddly private lyricism complements the more extroverted cartwheels of his colleagues. And though you have to listen closely to appreciate all of his knowing nuances, Pee Wee's solos are still the freshest in Dixieland lore. (Although Pee Wee claimed he never did play Dixieland; he said he played Pee Wee Russell.)

Other singular storytellers on hand are Bobby Hackett, Max Kaminsky, Jelly Roll Morton (on only one track), the volcanic Sidney Bechet, the early modern jazz pianist, Clyde Hart, and Edmond Hall, a clarinetist of uncommon intensity and grace, with a tartly bracing sound.

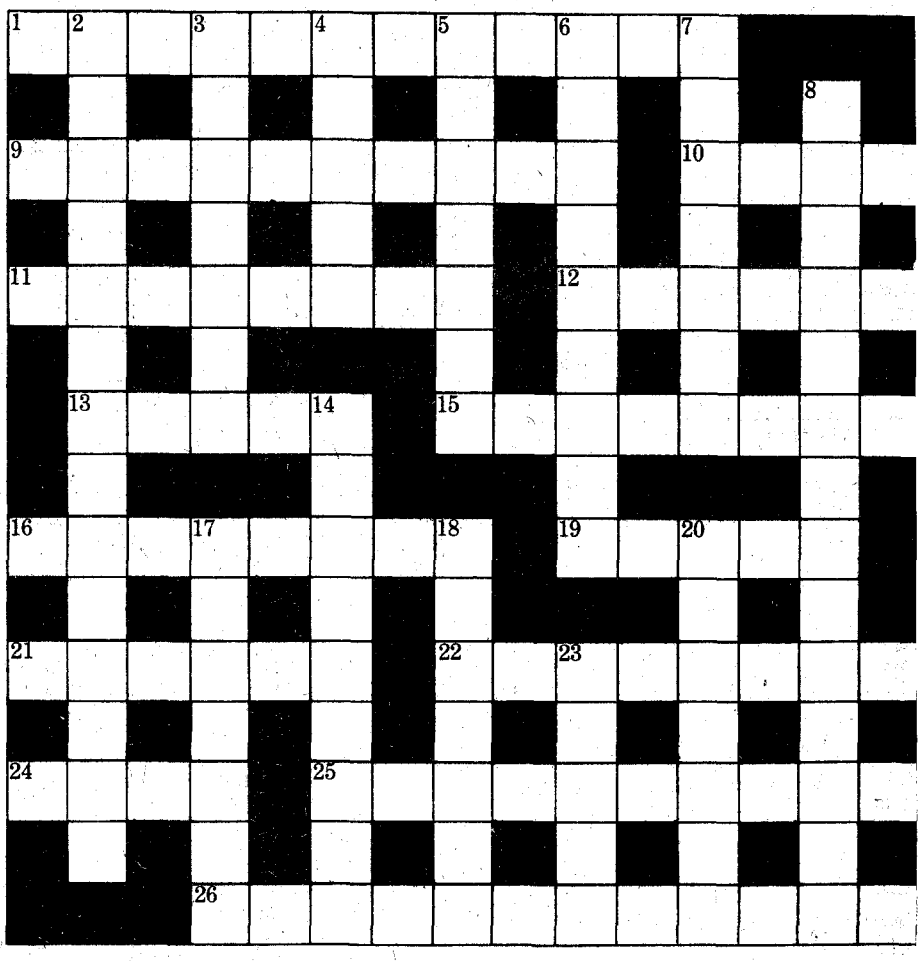
Toward the end, Jack Teagarden—the Texas trombonist who was shaped by black sounds but created a style that was warmly and authoritatively his own—is heard in his usual celebratory mood. There's a cameo appearance by Fats Waller while, on many of the tracks, the nonpareil entrepreneur of Dixieland, Eddie Condon, is on guitar—resolutely avoiding any solo work. Condon was convinced that the guitar was designed for rhythm purposes only.

The set, *Commodore Jazz Classics*, is of abiding value both for the music and for the history it rings out. Many of these players are dead, and while there are middle-aged and even young Dixieland bands about, nearly all the players now are almost entirely derivative. Actually, their models include the improvisers on this set. So it can be accurately said that these 1938-50 sessions were the apogee of Dixieland. Practically every one of these players had evolved his own distinctive, assertive conception and was justly proud, even swaggeringly so, of what he had wrought. Those who have followed are more on the order of Xerox.

Milt Gabler once explained his own addiction to these sounds: "I never can tell when I'm going to be lifted out of my seat. That doesn't come with arranged music. You don't get knocked out. You don't get the bottom, the drive, the big, fat, hot note." (For information on this set, Book-of-the-Month Records, Camp Hill, Pa. 17012). □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1776

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 See 12 across
9 Whimpers, on a little provocation, not being self-involved there. (10)
10 Fighting around the East, but it's only put on. (4)
11 and 25 The president wasn't talking about any particular one of fifty in his message, or the condition of the joint. (3, 5,2,3,5)
12 and 1 across Implying a kind of drum is an off-shoot of one using a reed, involved in a lifting operation. (3,3,3,6,3)
13 A good place in Germany to eat? (5)
15 Climbed up awkwardly in his den. (8)
16 Put up a squawk, and certainly not subject to this! (6,2)
19 If you have any scruples, this is only one of the score for each. (5)
21 Amazed because part of the gag has this? (6)
22 Equally projected toward the center to such a degree? (8)
24 Fuss over the fingerboard? (4)
25 See 11 across
26 And is "aster" a reason to show such a spot of blight? (8, 4)

DOWN

2 A former VP is on soft ground, when it comes to painting a screen personality. (8,6)
3 Are those putting out the paper als found in irons? (7)
4 B and all the rest are like spaghetti. (5
5 They might be found on the track o numbers men. (7)
6 Leaving, as some say, a kind of headache (9)
7 They work with what comes off 3. (7)
8 The French laws—not necessarily broke by Wellington's secret agents. (10,4)
14 Brief written comments to uprising i various countries. (9)
17 Such things as 8 might be somethin done in dire need. (7)
18 A poet is responsible for such soporifi stuff. (7)
20 In the main, Mao is a regular gas! (7)
23 The girl finds no help in the capital o South Australia. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1775

ACROSS: 1 and 6 Walter De la Mare; 1 Rotting; 11 Radicle; 12 Inks; 13 One another 16 Shallow; 17 Airline; 20 Rainbow; 22 O all sides; 23 Blue; 25 Idiotic; 26 Entwine; 2 Yoga; 28 As it stands. DOWN: 1 Workin majority; 2 Latakia; 3 Exit; 4 Dugongs; Lariats; 7 Alcohol; 8 Eyebrow tweezers; Idiomatic; 14 Oscillate; 18 and 15 Readin glasses; 19 Evinces; 20 Reelect; 21 Belgiar 24 Stet.

Readers are invited to send for a free copy of Mr. Lewis's "ground rules." Addres Puzzle Department, *The Nation*, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10014.

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